



Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
Governance Review Workshop #2
October 4, 2019

RECORD OF WORKSHOP

BACKGROUND

On Friday, October 4, 2019, Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program Directors, Alternate Directors, and Regional District Chief Administrative Officers met in a workshop to review cost apportionment in anticipation of the 2020 SIR Program budget. Time was also spent considering the potential for legislative reform.

The session on October 4 was the second of two workshops for the SIR Governance Review. The overall purpose of the Review is to examine legislative and structural changes that participants feel may be needed in order to position the Program for future success.

In advance of the October 4 session, workshop participants received two documents to guide discussion at the event:

- a briefing note titled *Cost Apportionment*
- a discussion paper titled *Potential for Legislative Reform*

This *Record of Workshop* summarizes the key points raised in the group discussion, and presents the major outcomes from the session.

WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

SIR Board Chair, Shirley Fowler, welcomed participants to the event and provided opening comments. SIR General Manager, Melissa Tesche, offered additional comments to set the stage for discussions, then reviewed the day's agenda with the group.

COST APPORTIONMENT

The workshop facilitator introduced the issue of cost apportionment and the briefing note that was included in the agenda package. It was noted that the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) had brought forward concerns in 2018 regarding the fairness of the current cost apportionment method, as well as the degree of consistency between the current method and that which is prescribed in the 1990 *OKSIR Regulation*.

Group discussion began with the RDNO's CAO outlining — at the request of the facilitator — the RDNO's concerns, including those related to fairness and consistency. The CAO for the Regional District Central Okanagan (RDCO) spoke to these concerns, including by putting forward a different interpretation of wording in the 1990 *Regulation*.

Considerable discussion followed involving representatives of the four participating regional districts and the Grower representatives on the Board. The group reached consensus on two key points:

- *Current Conditions Important* — The cost apportionment method determined by the province in 1990 (and set out in the *Regulation*) reflected the circumstances in place at time. Similarly, the 2006 change in cost apportionment determined by the participating regional districts reflected the prevailing conditions in that year. Neither approach necessarily reflects the conditions in place today in the SIR service area.

- *Service Participants Should Decide* — Regardless of the particular basis (or bases) used, participants felt that the method of cost apportionment should be determined by the participating regional districts, not by the province.

A number of the potential bases for cost-sharing that were identified in the briefing note were discussed by participants, including converted assessment (land), converted assessment (land and improvements), taxable acreage, and population. Participants debated the pros and cons of the different methods, emphasizing the importance of choosing a method that can be supported by all regional districts as fair and defensible.

Working Group

Workshop participants agreed that further review of potential options for cost-sharing, and the implications associated with the options, is necessary. Participants agreed to ask the SIR Board to establish a Working Group on Apportionment to examine the options and identify a preferred apportionment method. The Working Group will present its preferred method for consideration to the SIR Board. The Working Group should include representation from each participating regional district, and provide its recommendations to the SIR Board within six months.

2020 Requisition

Workshop participants felt that the RDNO's 2018 request to review the current apportionment method should not be set aside entirely, pending the conclusion of the Working Group's efforts. By consensus, participants asked that the SIR Board, in recognition of the RDNO's request, consider reducing RDNO's 2020 value tax requisition by \$20,000.00. This reduction, which would apply only to RDNO, and which would be funded using 2020 net revenues from project sales, would be provided as a goodwill gesture in support of ongoing collaboration.

Service Area

During the discussion on apportionment, the issue of Program service area arose. It was noted that of all the participating regional districts, only RDCO includes its entire land base — and, thus, entire land assessment base — in the Program's service area. This matter, which has implications for cost-sharing, can be expected to arise during further discussions on apportionment.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

The paper on legislative reform outlines the SIR Program's existing MEVA-based legislative framework, examines the challenges faced by the Program under the framework, and identifies three potential legislative reform options for discussion. The facilitator briefly reviewed the paper, then invited workshop participants to share their perspectives on the matter.

Workshop participants spoke to possible changes to the legislation in the near term in order to introduce a new method of cost apportionment (to be identified by Working Group), and to enable the Program to address other invasive pests. Workshop participants agreed that these changes (and possibly others) would be best approached on a case-by-case basis through requests for Orders in Council (OICs), made pursuant to the authority provided to Cabinet in the MEVA.

Workshop participants acknowledged that more fundamental legislative reform aimed at removing the Program from the MEVA-based framework may be important to consider at some future point. Further study on the potential for broader reform by the SIR Board and participating regional districts may have value, particularly as a medium-term project. In the immediate term, however, the preference is to pursue necessary legislative change using OICs.