

Flush it out

Drake and Kendrick Lamar aren't the only ones beefing these days. Metro Vancouver and Acciona are having a public spat over who is at fault for the stalled and \$3-billion over-budget North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant. Both sides are effectively trying to litigate the matter via the media, which helps no one.

If the project were over budget simply because of inflation or COVID delays, we would understand, begrudgingly. But the half-built, stalled monstrosity sticking out of the ground on First Street is a testament to major mistakes having been made. That means we are owed accountability.

Acciona and Metro Vancouver are suing each other in court actions with hundreds of millions of dollars at stake. But the trial isn't scheduled to start until 2027, and who knows how long it will take. Far more

likely, we worry, is the two parties will settle out of court and sign non-disclosure agreements that guarantee the citizens never learn anything, which would be unacceptable.

The B.C. government needs to read the room here. People are financially stretched and absolutely no one is in the mood to be paying more than they have to for anything. That includes \$600 per year just to cover the cost overruns on this project.

Notwithstanding the court action, there must be an independent public inquiry with recommendations for improvements to our procurement system. More than answering how our tax dollars were flushed away, it is the only way to restore faith in the methods we use to build critical infrastructure, and our system of regional governance more broadly.
