

Dear fellow council members,

In early 2024 the BC Conservation Foundation challenged the town of lake cowichan to make a statement by bringing in a bylaw to ban all sunscreens from being sold in lake cowichan that weren't non nano mineral sunscreens.

Following this, I was appointed as the sunscreen rep for the town, with a goal to talk with all local businesses about the economic impacts of such a ban and also if they would get on board with such an initiative.

I have now spoken with all the businesses in town and I can report that everyone is very positive about such an action. The general feeling is that this is more than achievable. The IDA will have the most difficult time with it as their in-house brands don't offer this type of product but with some runway and room to get rid of current stock, I think 2026 would be fitting to install this bylaw and make a statement to the rest of the region to explore similar actions.

Recommended action:

The Town of Lake Cowichan put out a statement advising residents and businesses of our stance on the sale of harmful sunscreens in our community. This statement should be released on international water day, March 22 2025. (recommended statement below)

Staff are directed to research the legality of a bylaw that bans all sunscreens that are not non-nano mineral sunscreens, being sold in the Town of Lake Cowichan and our capacity to enforce such a bylaw. A timeline of January 1 2026 would be targeted if a bylaw is realistic.

Recommended statement:

RE: The sale of harmful sunscreens within the Town of Lake Cowichan

In celebration of World Water Day, the Town of Lake Cowichan finds it fitting to update our community on the initiatives we are working on to preserve our surrounding waterways.

In early 2024, the BC Conservation Foundation presented findings of high levels of oxybenzone at our popular recreational beaches around the lake and river. Following that presentation, the Town of Lake Cowichan was challenged to take action against the sale of sunscreens that were harmful to our pristine lake and heritage river.

Over the past few months, the Town of Lake Cowichan has been approaching local retailers and discussing a potential bylaw being implemented, that would prohibit the sale of any sunscreen that is not a non-nano mineral sunscreen within the towns boundaries.

We have been met with positivity and encouragement from our local businesses on this initiative and are now exploring the legality and enforcement challenges that such a bylaw may represent.

Although we understand that visitors to our community can bring sunscreens purchased from outside of our town, we are trying to educate as well as encourage businesses outside of Lake Cowichan, to take similar action.

For more information on what sunscreen to use this summer, please visit <https://www.bccf.com/aqua-safe-sunscreen/>