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City of
Richmond

Central Coast Regional District

Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor

6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4123
Fax No: 604-276-4332
www.richmond.ca

April 29, 2014

Patricia Heintzman
President, Lower Mainland Local Government Association
#60 – 10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, B.C. V6X 2W9

Dear Ms. Heintzman:

Re: Special Resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association Regarding the Provincial Government's March 27, 2014 Decision to Place Some Communities in an Agricultural Land Reserve Zone 2

This is to advise that at its Regular Council meeting held on Monday, April 28, 2014, Richmond City Council adopted the following resolution:

- (1) *Whereas the provincial government has, without consultation with the public or with local governments, created two zones for the Agricultural Land Reserve in the Province of BC, thereby discriminating between regions and potentially constraining their ability to achieve and sustain agricultural self-sufficiency and economic development;*
- (2) *Whereas not all affected regions wish to see the requirements of the Agricultural Land Reserve weakened in Zone 2;*
- (3) *Whereas substantial agricultural activity has historically taken place and is currently being practiced outside of Zone 1;*
- (4) *Whereas the local panel system may also be discriminatory between regions;*
- (5) *Therefore be it resolved that LMLGA send a letter to the Union of BC Municipalities, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development Coralee Oakes, and Premier Christy Clark, with copies to all BC local governments, requesting that the provincial government undertake consultation with the public, local governments, the Union of BC Municipalities, and affected parties, on the proposed two-zone approach and other changes to the ALR and that Bill 24 not be brought into force until such consultation is complete and taken into account.*

If you require further information, please feel free to contact Terry Crowe, Manager, Policy Planning at 604-276-4139.

Yours truly,

Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor





Changes to Agricultural Land Commission

Apr 23, 2014

Bill 24 - the *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act* - has introduced some major changes to how agricultural land will be managed. The Bill is the result of government's core review of all provincial government organizations.

The legislation divides the Province into two agricultural zones. Zone 1 will include the existing Island, South Coast and Okanagan; zone 2 will include the existing Interior, Kootenay and North. The mandate in Zone 1 will be similar to the current process with primary focus being on the preservation of agricultural land. The mandate in Zone 2 will be broadened from the preservation of agricultural land to include economic, cultural and social values in the area; regional and community planning objectives and other prescribed considerations.

The size and make-up of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Board will be changed. The minimum size of the Board will be increased to 13 individuals; the Lieutenant Governor in Council will appoint 6 vice chairs, each of whom must be resident in a different panel region; and provides for the appointment by the minister of additional members of the commission. A condition of the appointment will be that the Commission members maintain residency in the region that they were originally appointed from. If a vice chair or member ceases to be a resident in that original panel region, his or her appointment expires.

The Province is looking to modernize the Commission's operations, such as establishing governance and accountability frameworks for the ALC, in line with other government agencies, boards and commissions. Service standards will be developed and implemented and vacancies will continue to be filled, including the appointment of a CEO through a merit-based hiring process.

In addition, the Province has introduced amendments to the *Local Government Act* (section 879) to improve land use planning coordination with local government. Local governments will be required to engage the ALC earlier in land use planning processes, such as Official Community Plans. Currently the ALC is engaged after first reading. Going forward, they will be engaged before the bylaw reaches first reading. The goal is to achieve more timely and efficient decisions through better coordination.

The Province has also indicated that "in consultation with the ALC, B.C.'s agricultural industry and the Union of BC Municipalities, amendments will be considered to current regulations to allow new, limited, value-added farming activities, such as food processing, on farmland. This responds to concerns from farmers that regulations prevent them from growing their agricultural businesses." In Zone 2, the Province has suggested that it will be looking for even broader flexibility in the regulations to consider non-agricultural home-based businesses.

The UBCM Executive has reviewed the legislative amendments. The Executive has indicated that it is interested in working with the ministry, the ALC and the agricultural industry in developing new regulations to ensure the preservation of farmland and to help the farming community. However, it has not yet determined whether or not it supports the legislative changes to the Agricultural Land Commission and will be seeking further consultation with the Province on this matter.