
By law update

From Jasmine Robertson [REDACTED]
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To Ben Maartman <ben.maartman@cvrd.bc.ca>

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To the Board of Directors of the Cowichan Valley Regional District,

I am writing to formally express my deep concern and strong opposition to the proposed bylaws currently under consideration. The scope and severity of these changes are not only troubling—they are profoundly out of touch with the realities faced by residents in this region.

The proposal to impose fines of up to \$50,000 per day for non-compliance is excessive to the point of being punitive rather than regulatory. Such a measure does not reflect reasonable governance; it reflects an approach that risks financially devastating ordinary residents over matters that should instead be addressed through education, cooperation, and proportionate enforcement.

The restrictions on small-scale food production—specifically limiting the number of chickens and prohibiting roosters regardless of property size—are equally concerning. For residents with larger properties striving toward even modest self-sufficiency, these limits are arbitrary and counterproductive. At a time when food prices and basic living costs continue to rise, policies that restrict individuals' ability to provide for themselves are not only impractical, but deeply irresponsible.

Similarly, the proposed restriction on fence heights to a maximum of three and a half feet disregards the practical needs of rural and semi-rural residents. Effective fencing is essential for protecting gardens from wildlife, particularly deer. Limiting fence height in this way directly undermines residents' ability to grow food and maintain their properties.

The proposed prohibition on living in RVs is especially alarming. In the context of an ongoing housing affordability crisis, this measure risks displacing individuals who are already navigating extremely difficult circumstances. Removing a viable housing option without providing realistic alternatives does not resolve a problem—it exacerbates it.

While it is acknowledged that open houses are scheduled, these appear to function primarily as information sessions rather than meaningful opportunities for public input prior to finalizing these rules. True public engagement requires that community feedback be actively sought, considered, and incorporated before decisions of this magnitude are made.

It is also important to emphasize that the authority exercised by this Board is derived directly from the residents it serves. The people of this region fund these institutions and place their trust in elected officials to act in the public's best interest. Decisions that significantly impact residents' livelihoods, housing stability, and ability to provide for themselves must reflect that responsibility.

Taken together, these proposed bylaws suggest a regulatory direction that is disconnected from the lived realities of the community. Residents are already under significant pressure from rising costs of food, fuel, and housing. Policies that further restrict self-sufficiency and increase financial risk will only deepen that strain.

I urge the Board to reconsider these proposals in their current form, to engage transparently and meaningfully with the public, and to pursue solutions that are balanced, practical, and reflective of the needs of the people you represent.

Respectfully,

Jasmine
CVRD resident