
Proposed By-law changes

From Ann Roche [REDACTED]

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To: The Councillors of the CVRD

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed bylaw changes to keeping chickens. This proposed legislation is unnecessarily restrictive and micro manages the use of our freehold properties. It is misdirected and flawed on so many levels.

We live in a rural area surrounded by acreages. The hobby farm is not only the norm but gives the Cowichan Valley its character and attracts visitors from all over the island. Farm animal sounds and sights make this part of the island distinctive. I am surrounded by neighbours on acreages with more than 6 hens and all have roosters. Never in my years here has anyone complained. In fact, I have people new to the area say that they love the "country sounds", having come from the city. People that live in this area on freehold land do so to be free of the restrictions of "strata living". There are many gated communities and strata they can move into if they want this kind of management.

I cannot imagine what the motivation is for these restrictions and by-laws.

Is it animal welfare? Free range hens with the protection of a rooster are healthier and happier. What evidence do you have to the contrary? All the chicken coops I pass each day have plenty of clean space. If animal welfare is your concern, address industrial agriculture abuse. Home chicken runs are not the big issue. If welfare is your concern then what should I do with my excess hens and rooster once these laws are passed. Should I take my 12 year old hen to the vet to be euthanised or have her boiled alive like the commercial egg farmers do?

Is it public health? Farm eggs are proven to be healthier. If hygiene is your concern, address the human faeces left in our public parks because the city municipality fails to provide sanitation to our homeless people. If public health is your concern, address homelessness in Duncan where your constituents have to sleep rough in all weather. Address the addiction crisis with more support, address the mental health crisis or maybe attract more medical practitioners to our area so we can see a doctor in a reasonable time frame.

Is it an environmental concern? Backyard chickens not only provide eggs but produce manure for gardens. Natural compost is an environmental win. I never smell our neighbourhood chickens but I can smell the dairy farms and commercial chicken farms when I drive past. I'm not suggesting you shut these down but home chicken keepers are not the big problem, but we are an easy target. If you are concerned about our environment, clean up the invasive species on public land. Clean up the mass of blackberry vines and weeds along the highway right in the town.

Do they attract vermin? Rural areas are habitat for owls that predate on rats. Instead of directing attention to chickens, look at the piles of junk and old car bodies on some properties, harbouring vermin and creating breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The fast food outlets in Duncan are alive with rats in the dumpsters.

There is a housing crisis, a mental health crisis, a loneliness epidemic, a drug crisis, an environmental crisis and your go-to is counting backyard chickens and measuring fences.

Backyard chicken keeping is an age-old practice that has always provided food security, a healthy pastime and even companionship between chicken keepers and the chickens themselves. Municipalities have no place dictating what species I consider to be a pet. They have no place

deciding what animals I can have emotional attachment to and have no qualification to stipulate broad-brush rules about how many chickens are appropriate without consideration to land area.

We all share concern for the challenges we face in these times. I would like to think our elected politicians can prioritise these concerns appropriately and consult with the constituents that you are all elected to serve.

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