
FW: Subject: Opposition to Proposed Residential Backyard Hen Regulations and Fence Height Restrictions

From Ben Maartman <ben.maartman@cvrld.bc.ca>
Date Fri 3/27/2026 7:55 PM
To legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca>

For the record

From: TERRI EVANS <tle0223@shaw.ca>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 11:36 AM
To: Zoning <zoning@cvrld.bc.ca>; Alison Nicholson <alison.nicholson@cvrld.bc.ca>
Cc: Ben Maartman <ben.maartman@cvrld.bc.ca>; Kate Segall <kate.segall@cvrld.bc.ca>; Sierra Acton <sierra.acton@cvrld.bc.ca>; Hilary Abbott <hilary.abbott@cvrld.bc.ca>; Alison Nicholson <alison.nicholson@cvrld.bc.ca>; Ian Morrison <ian.morrison@cvrld.bc.ca>; Mike Wilson <mike.wilson@cvrld.bc.ca>; Karen Deck <karen.deck@cvrld.bc.ca>; Jesse McClinton <jesse.mcclinton@cvrld.bc.ca>
Subject: Subject: Opposition to Proposed Residential Backyard Hen Regulations and Fence Height Restrictions

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Dear CVRD Zoning Staff and Directors,

I am writing as a resident of the Cowichan Valley to express my strong opposition to the proposed zoning bylaw changes, which will significantly impact the ability for CVRD residents to ensure their own food security, and the food security of the CVRD as a whole.

First, the proposed bylaw regarding backyard hens, including limits on the number of hens, the prohibition of roosters, and the very restrictive coop and manure requirements currently being considered are excessive. [planyourcowichan +1]

While I understand the need to address noise, odour, and animal welfare, these proposed rules go far beyond what is reasonable for small-scale backyard flocks and feel like an unnecessary overreach into residents' ability to grow and raise their own food. Requirements such as fully enclosed buildings with specific minimum and maximum floor areas, setbacks, and storage limits for manure will be costly and difficult for many households to meet, and they effectively discourage people from keeping hens at all. [planyourcowichan +1]

Backyard hens provide important benefits to families and the community, including local food security, reduced food waste through kitchen-scrap feeding, natural pest control, and educational opportunities for children to learn about responsible animal care and where food comes from. In a time of rising food prices and concerns about supply chains, residents should be supported—not restricted—in keeping small flocks in a humane and responsible way. [planyourcowichan]

In addition, I also have concerns about the fence height regulations in residential zones. A large percentage of citizens in the CVRD live rural, but are not designated Agricultural. There is a significant deer and elk population in the CVRD. Anybody with young fruit trees and/or a garden can attest - 1.2-1.8m fencing is not adequate to keep deer, and especially elk, from entering the property and decimating these foods crops. Backyard gardens and fruit trees are crucial food sources for many vulnerable citizens in the CVRD, with the cost of groceries, and especially fresh produce, at an all time high.

Food insecurity in the CVRD is critical. Over 20% of families in the Cowichan Valley experience food insecurity. That is 1 in 5 households. Food hamper distribution has increased by over 200% since 2024. However, donations

to local food banks are at critical lows. [Cowichan Valley Basket Society]. Removing the ability for residents to raise and grow their own food is exacerbating and already precarious situation.

In addition, many retired folks supplement income by selling eggs and produce. The rising cost of everything - groceries, gas, property tax - means people cannot afford to live here anymore. It is unsustainable.

I thought food security in the Valley was a priority?

Finally, I find it very concerning that this is the first most people are hearing about this. Why was there no public consultation? You are elected officials, representing the citizens in your districts.

The people should have been notified and consulted about these proposed changes.

I strongly urge the Board and staff to:

- Reconsider or reject these specific hen-keeping provisions and fence height restrictions in the draft bylaw. [planyourcowichan]
- **Engage meaningfully with residents and urban homesteaders to develop more balanced rules** that address genuine nuisances without placing excessive burdens on ordinary families. [planyourcowichan +1]
- Look at other B.C. communities that allow backyard hens with simpler, more practical standards that still protect neighbours and animal welfare. [town.lakecowichan]

Please record our opposition to these proposed regulations as part of the public input on this bylaw, and ensure it is shared with Directors before they proceed to further readings or adoption. [cvrd +1]

Sincerely,

Lois Evans, Teresa Evans & Alon Azar

4630 Howie Road North, Electoral Area E

Cowichan Valley Regional District

250-589-8757

tle0223@shaw.ca