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Date Fri 3/27/2026 12:12 PM
To legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca>

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Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 9:52 AM
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Subject:

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To: The Councillors of the CVRD

Hi

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed bylaw changes to keeping chickens.

I realize that not all of you represent Shawnigan Lake where I live but I have heard upset, anger and frustration from those in other areas, in person and on many social media sites, all wanting to reach out to you, so I took the time to look you all up and will share with those concerned.

The rest of the plan has issues but one thing at a time.

This proposed legislation is unnecessarily restrictive and micro manages the use of our free hold properties. It is misdirected and flawed on so many levels.

I am astounded that in these times of economic instability, financial uncertainty and food insecurity that the CVRD thought this was the time to make things tougher for their constituents.

Many of your constituents live in a rural area surrounded by acreages. Small hobby farms are not only the norm but gives the Cowichan Valley its character and attracts visitors from all over the island.

If you look at the property sales in your neighbourhoods, many people moved out here to get away from the cities, and those who buy larger lots, most often are looking exactly for that, country, living on the land, back to their roots experience having their own gardens, chickens, a simpler life.

Farm animal sounds and sights make this part of the island distinctive. Many are 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. Let’s be clear, the majority of your constituents do NOT.

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.

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.

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 every community covered by the CVRD where you have constituents having 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.

There are commercial operations that smell horrible, I’m not suggesting you shut these down but home chicken keepers are not the big problem, but they are an easy target.

If you are concerned about the environment, clean up the invasive species like broom on public land. Clean up the mass of blackberry vines and weeds along the highway right in the town.

Is it that they attract vermin? Rural areas are habitat for owls that dine on rats and its a fact that there are more rats in the cities where there are more people and garbage.

Now for sure there are some issues with backyard farmers, I read one post of a woman whose neighbour in a small residential lot in the CVRD has 15 chickens and multiple roosters. There are issues between these neighbours and this sb dealt with but deal with the problems rather than restrict the whole community because of one bad actor.

Instead of so much focus on chickens, how about you do something with the nuisance properties, look at the piles of junk and old car bodies on some properties, there is one on

Shawnigan Lake Road that doesn't even try to hide it. It's known for " bucking authority" and no one does anything about it

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, their families and the chickens themselves.

I am also not sure why roosters are banned completely. Sure having a 6 in a small lot w/ alot, but not even 1 on an acre plot? Seems arbitrary and punitive.

In addition, 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.

A quick search shows the City of Victoria allows 15!!!
Saanich (who allows nothing) allows 5-10.

In Langford, a city gone mostly small lot residential you can have 5 which I think is reasonable.

For the Cowichan Valley larger lots, a max 6 period is unfair and punitive and quite frankly poorly thought out.

These are trying, tough times and most people I know are just trying to get by. Everyone I have spoken to feels blindsided by these updates. Forgetting who you represent has been many a politicians downfall. Listening and correcting course is the only way forward.

I believe there is an election this fall mere weeks after you propose enacting these changes. While turnout is traditionally low here, I pledge to vote and do all I can to encourage others to vote out anyone short sighted enough to continue on this path.

K.Grantham
Shawnigan Lake