
FW: Proposed changes to bylaws

From Ben Maartman <ben.maartman@cvrld.bc.ca>
Date Fri 3/27/2026 7:52 PM
To legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca>

For the record

From: Shannon [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 9:58 AM
To: PlanYourCowichan <planyourcowichan@cvrld.bc.ca>; Ben Maartman <ben.maartman@cvrld.bc.ca>
Cc: newstips@globalnews.ca
Subject: Proposed changes to bylaws

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)
To Whom It May Concern,

I am both shocked and disappointed in reading the proposed bylaw changes that were recently brought to my attention in a farming group. Judging by the amount of shared outrage among my friends, the general consensus is these changes are a gross overreach and a thoughtless proposal that paints the entire region as anti-farming and out of touch with reality. I don't know who was consulted with during this process or if the input of the planning commissions has been completely ignored, but there is no way any informed person residing in this community would vote in favor of these changes.

For one, bylaw enforcement has traditionally been complaint driven and I am very opposed to the ability of bylaw officers to arbitrarily fine non-compliance with up to \$50,000 a day. That is a tone deaf response to a community that is traditionally co-operative and neighborly. I also wonder who will be deciding how this is enforced, considering even complaint-driven infractions in my own neighborhood with multiple people reporting them have been ignored and allowed to continue.

I won't speak to changes to ALR and zones that are different than mine, I'll let them speak for themselves. I currently own a 3 acre rural residential property in area H. To date there have been no limits on the number of hens or roosters I can have, and none of my neighbors has complained. With the new rules, I'll be limited to 6 hens and no roosters. Considering hens live for 5 years on average and the number of eggs they produce drops each year, this will not provide eggs for my family of four on a consistent basis. It also removes my ability to sell eggs as I won't have any extras.

The new rules state that all produced food must be sold at a roadside stand, something many of us did away with years ago due to ongoing theft. Even with cameras and deterrents theft is common and a devastating blow to a small producer. Stealing \$50 of food a week from a stand is unlikely to be pursued by RCMP or reported to insurance, however with small scale farmers operating at cost and often selling below cost, this is major theft which threatens their operation.

In order to run a small breeding program of heritage hens and to sell hatching eggs, chicks, and young stock, this means that having at least one and preferably a few roosters on hand. Genetic diversity is important, and shockingly hens cannot produce fertilized eggs without a male. For biosecurity reasons I prefer to use my own stock. Several years ago I added new birds to my program which unfortunately carried a disease and took out my entire flock which meant years of selective breeding was destroyed in one summer.

The banning of on site slaughter is a disservice to animal welfare and farmers. Chickens are considered an exotic pet per the veterinary association, and there are a very limited number of vets who will see chickens and few are accepting new clients. Waiting for an appointment and travelling to see a vet prolongs the suffering of a chicken who needs euthanasia immediately. For those that do process chickens for food, transferring chickens off site adds a level of stress and trauma to their last days, something that is avoided by using the services of a licensed mobile abattoir that offers on farm slaughter services.

This also removes the ability to have hens free ranging outside their enclosure, which is important for diet, exercise, and enrichment for chickens. Many people intentionally seek out eggs from small farms where they know the chickens are cared for, where they can see them outside and eating grass and bugs and feel good about the ethics of the purchase of animal products. I can't tell you how many times I've had people stop and smile at my fence watching my hens run around the yard enjoying life.

We intentionally sought out property in this area because of the ability to have my livestock at home, to give my kids the experience of growing up enjoying an outside country lifestyle while still being able to attend school and recreational activities a stone's throw away from town. We invested a significant amount of money into this community, subdividing our original 5 acres and providing two families and two renters with homes. We support our local hay farmers, aggregate businesses, feed and garden stores, and we built a new home which supported construction, trade, and supply companies as well. Over time we have built our entire lives around the ability to grow food, have chickens, and enjoy a country life. If these changes are brought in, we will not hesitate to leave the community and sadly, that likely means our farm property will become only a residential one, a loss to food security in this area.

Sincerely,

Shannon Boisvert