
FW: Concerns Regarding Proposed Zoning Bylaws Restricting Backyard Food Production

From Zoning <Zoning@cvrd.bc.ca>

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To legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrd.bc.ca>

From: Elyse Cornish [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 9:11 AM

To: [REDACTED] Deena Beeston <dbeeston@ladysmith.ca>

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Zoning Bylaws Restricting Backyard Food Production

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Cowichan Valley Regional District,

I am writing to express serious concern regarding the recent adoption and implementation of Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 4373 and the associated zoning and enforcement bylaws now being applied across the Cowichan Valley.

While I understand the need for long-term planning and environmental stewardship, the current direction represents a significant shift in how residents are able to use and manage their own property. Many residents feel these changes have been introduced with insufficient public awareness and limited meaningful consultation.

Of particular concern are the enforcement provisions associated with these bylaws. The allowance for penalties of up to \$50,000 per offence, compounded daily, creates an environment of substantial legal and financial risk for ordinary residents and is absolutely outrageous. Even if such penalties are not commonly applied at their maximum, their existence has a chilling effect on individuals' ability to use their land with confidence.

Additionally, the increasingly restrictive nature of zoning - where uses not explicitly permitted are prohibited - raises concerns about the loss of flexibility for rural living. This includes impacts on small-scale food production, home-based income activities, storage of personal equipment such as trailers or recreational vehicles, and the ability to protect property from wildlife.

The cumulative effect of these changes is a perception that residents are losing autonomy over their land, while facing increasing regulatory complexity and potential penalties.

I respectfully request that the CVRD:

- Pause further implementation of new zoning restrictions until broader public engagement is conducted.
- Provide clear, accessible summaries of how these bylaws affect everyday property use.
- Reconsider enforcement frameworks to ensure they are proportionate and not punitive in nature.
- Engage directly with residents in open forums to rebuild trust and transparency.

The Cowichan Valley has long been valued for its rural character, self-sufficiency, and community independence. It is essential that future planning respects these values while balancing broader regional goals.

Sincerely,
Elyse Cornish