

Revised Draft Letter – CZB 4710 Feedback

I am writing in response to the draft proposal CZB 4710. While I understand the desire for CVRD Staff to unify bylaws across the region, I would appreciate clarity on whether these changes are being driven by actual issues occurring on rural properties, or whether this is primarily a Staff-initiated exercise for administrative convenience.

Several Directors have commented that the concern is “urban growth and not about changing rural areas.” However, the proposed bylaw does introduce significant changes that directly affect rural properties. In our case, it would reclassify our property from Rural to R1, the very lifestyle and zoning we intentionally chose when we moved here twenty-five years ago.

Having worked in government for more than forty years, I am very aware that increased regulation inevitably leads to increased staffing requirements. After two substantial tax increases in the past two years, including a 30% increase last year, I do not believe residents have an appetite for additional bureaucracy within the CVRD. Too often, exercises like this unintentionally create opportunities for internal “empire building” rather than delivering meaningful improvements for the public.

While local governments, including the CVRD, are diligent in seeking public input, experience has shown that this process is frequently used to satisfy procedural requirements rather than genuinely influence outcomes. Residents deserve confidence that their feedback will be taken seriously, not simply acknowledged and set aside.

After reviewing the full document, I am concerned that some elements do not reflect the realities of rural life or existing successful businesses. These are just two of many glaring examples:

Food Trucks:

The proposed limit of eight hours in one location, followed by a mandatory move, is unworkable. Many food truck operators in the South Cowichan area, including well-established businesses such as Drifters Ice Cream in Cobble Hill rely on longer operating days, especially during peak season. Losing two hours of business on a busy summer weekend could be the difference between profit and loss.

Additionally, requiring trucks to move twice a day increases emissions, fuel consumption, and operational costs, the opposite of what we should be encouraging in an era of environmental responsibility.

The prohibition on auxiliary structures is also impractical. Where are operators expected to store chairs, tables, or other basic amenities? Are they expected to add another vehicle to the road simply to transport these items?

Food trucks contribute positively to tourism, community vibrancy, and nearby brick-and-mortar businesses. These proposed restrictions undermine that success.

Homebased Services:

This is another area of overreach that is simply unrealistic. As an owner of a homebased business, I would no longer be able to operate my Small Engine Repair Service as my lot is less 0.4 ha even though my neighbours are aware, and supportive. And as a community member we respect those neighbours, by limiting customer visits a keep our property neat and clean.

As stated at the beginning of this letter I understand the intent of the bylaw, but realistically this is not an apples-to-apples situation, and one comprehensive zoning bylaw does not meet the needs or desires of those of us that have chosen a rural lifestyle.

In closing I feel that this bylaw needs to be placed on hold until it can be properly reviewed and have an open an honest dialogue with our citizens to find out and clearly demonstrate why there is a need for this. Many of these rule changes may be applicable if you live in urban area such as Victoria but totally overreach for our rural community.

Please remember the majority of those who have chosen to live in these areas have do so to get away from those same restrictions imposed by city living and have enjoyed the freedom for many years. Introducing restrictions of this scope during an election year carries some risk. Without thoughtful revisions and broader community engagement, the CVRD Board may find residents seeking change this fall.

Respectfully,

Glendon Smith

4546 Bench Rd
Duncan BC V9L-6M6
250-709-2577