

Nareka Jacques

Subject: RE: Proposed CRD Foodlands Access Service

From: Jason Austin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Emilie Gorman <Emilie.Gorman@csaanich.ca>; Pamela Martin <Pamela.Martin@csaanich.ca>
Cc: Mayor Ryan Windsor <Ryan.Windsor@csaanich.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Proposed CRD Foodlands Access Service

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Subject:Re: Proposed CRD Foodlands Access Service

Date:Wed, 22 Jan 2025 14:27:05 -0800

From:Jason Austin [REDACTED]

To:council@langford.ca, Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>, council@saanich.ca, council@esquimalt.ca, cday@colwood.ca, dgrove@colwood.ca, iward@colwood.ca, mayorandcouncil@metchosin.ca, admin@sidney.ca, obcouncil@oakbay.ca, council@sooke.ca, mayorandcouncil@viewroyal.ca, kwilliams@highlands.ca, [REDACTED]
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CC:CRDBoard@crd.bc.ca, jcaradonna@crd.bc.ca, ccoleman@crd.bc.ca, sbrice@crd.bc.ca, zdevries@crd.bc.ca, bdesjardins@crd.bc.ca, Ryan Windsor <rwindsor@crd.bc.ca>, directorsgi@crd.bc.ca, cplant@crd.bc.ca, Cliff McNeilSmith <cmcneilsmith@crd.bc.ca>, dthompson@crd.bc.ca, charder@crd.bc.ca, mtait@crd.bc.ca, pjones@crd.bc.ca, directorjdf@crd.bc.ca, kwilliams@crd.bc.ca, stobias@crd.bc.ca, malto@crd.bc.ca, sgoodmanson@crd.bc.ca, directorssi@crd.bc.ca, mlittle@crd.bc.ca, kmurdoch@crd.bc.ca, dougkobayashi@crd.bc.ca, jbrownoff@crd.bc.ca

To the Mayors and Councils of the Capital Region

cc The CRD Board of Directors

Dear Mayors and members of Council

As I outlined in my email of January 15th the CRD proposes a Foodlands Access Service under which they have **the potential to charge the municipalities in excess of \$1,000,000 every year**. Their formula links it to assessed property values so the allowable charge to the municipalities will likely increase every

year. I have attached my calculations of your potential annual charges. Saanich leads the list with a potential annual requisition of \$273,162, followed by Victoria with \$230,077 and Langford at \$110,709.

The CRD proposal is based on a discredited 2019 study which is a fantasy vision of rosy cheeked young folk striding across the fields carrying baskets of vegetables. The reality is quite the reverse - young people are not in small scale crop farming because they know they cannot make a living at it.

The CRD took this proposal to the municipalities in 2019 and the majority of the municipalities rejected it. The CRD has now come back with an even more expensive version of the same thing and intend to spend the money themselves and charge the municipalities for it.

There are no credible business studies to support the CRD proposal and every independent study shows that small scale farmers cannot make a living from farming food crops.

2010 Cowichan Valley - 80 per cent of farmers grossed less than \$25,000

<https://www.saanichnews.com/news/seeds-of-dissent-growing-on-peninsula-farms-271744>

2011 Central Saanich study: "... as a whole, the CS agricultural sector barely covered direct expenses, generated little gross margin and no return on investment"

https://www.centralesaanich.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/agricultural_area_plan_0.pdf

2016 Saanich study: 50 farms in the 2-10 acre size and only 3 grossed more than \$25,000 before expenses

<https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Planning/BackgroundReportAFSP0525.pdf>

The sad reality is that with some few exceptions our local farms are too small; our climate is not quite warm enough; the small farmers do not have access to affordable labour; they don't have access to markets to sell their produce and they can't make a living by selling at the farm gate; and the imported produce is often so cheap that our farmers can not live on that price even if they could sell.

The CRD advanced their proposal as an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) which of course no one saw so there has been no public discussion. And as I showed in a separate email yesterday, the CRD Notice was misleading because it was written as if the \$1,000,000 was a one time charge instead of the annual charge it is intended to be. Compare this to the City of Victoria's approach on the Crystal Pool where Victoria is using a referendum instead of an AAP – consequently there has been a wide ranging public discussion that has brought forward significant new information, so it will be an informed public in Victoria that has the opportunity to vote on it. This is in direct contrast to the hidden AAP approach the CRD has used here.

In summary the CRD foodlands proposal is an expensive fantasy that the public have not had the opportunity to discuss.

The proposal will now advance to the CRD Board on February 12.

Please look again at the charges your municipalities will be exposed to if this goes through, yet it will not move the dial on food security in the region. I know this better than most because I farm and I donate all my produce to the food banks, averaging 40,000 lbs a year.

If the CRD is genuine about a desire to reduce food insecurity and to help farmers, then create a simple Farm Voucher program where Capital Region food banks are given vouchers by the CRD that they can use to buy produce from Capital Region farmers - this way two at risk groups benefit from the one funding, and there are no administration costs. I detailed this in my January 15th email.

I do not ask you to express an opinion on farming. What I do ask is that you pass a resolution calling on the CRD to reconsider this foodlands proposal and have a public discussion. Insist that the public be put into the position of the Victoria voters on the Crystal pool - to be afforded the opportunity to know the options; to be able to express an opinion that others can see; to be able to weigh the evidence; and then to be able to vote on it.

Thank you.

Jason Austin	I agree,	I agree,	We agree,	I agree,	I
agree,					
Gatton Farm	Brett Smyth	Hamish Crawford	Brian & Wendy Draper	Anita	
Bull	Karen Harris				
Central Saanich	Smyth Farm	The Roost	Grapes-Grapes	B's	
Nest	Equestrian				

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Proposed CRD Bylaw 4602

Allocations of the annual potential costs to the municipalities

Central Saanich	43,785
Colwood	43,931
Esquimalt	38,258
Highlands	6,182
Langford	110,709
Metchosin	11,270
North Saanich	36,692
Oak Bay	51,855
Saanich	273,162
Sidney	32,639
Sooke	32,556
Victoria	230,077
View Royal	26,706
Juan de Fuca	15,235
Salt Spring Island	29,983
Southern Gulf Islands	19,326

Total potential annual costs	<u>\$ 1,002,367</u>
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See the detailed calculations and notes in the sheet

Bylaw 4602 Details

Potential ANNUAL charges to the municipalities from CRD farmland Bylaw 4602

	Potential annual cost (G+K)	Assessed values 2024	Converted values		50% allocation by converted assessment (G*D32)	Population		50% allocation by population (J*D32)
Central Saanich	43,785	7,939,202,291	940,613,176	4.45%	\$ 22,315.54	19,215	4.28%	\$ 21,469.34
Colwood	43,931	7,514,404,415	826,945,685	3.91%	\$ 19,618.84	21,759	4.85%	\$ 24,311.80
Esquimalt	38,258	6,040,858,606	687,695,262	3.26%	\$ 16,315.20	19,639	4.38%	\$ 21,943.08
Highlands	6,182	1,230,811,550	133,874,982	0.63%	\$ 3,176.11	2,690	0.60%	\$ 3,005.60
Langford	110,709	18,452,291,619	2,186,331,024	10.35%	\$ 51,869.52	52,661	11.74%	\$ 58,839.28
Metchosin	11,270	2,242,791,785	228,180,080	1.08%	\$ 5,413.45	5,242	1.17%	\$ 5,857.00
North Saanich	36,692	8,529,308,928	928,795,732	4.40%	\$ 22,035.18	13,118	2.92%	\$ 14,657.03
Oak Bay	51,855	12,305,952,866	1,262,567,858	5.98%	\$ 29,953.74	19,602	4.37%	\$ 21,901.74
Saanich	273,162	49,592,888,717	5,433,968,140	25.72%	\$ 128,917.96	129,098	28.78%	\$ 144,243.99
Sidney	32,639	6,412,950,329	769,254,206	3.64%	\$ 18,250.14	12,878	2.87%	\$ 14,388.87
Sooke	32,556	5,418,944,519	582,186,138	2.76%	\$ 13,812.05	16,776	3.74%	\$ 18,744.19
Victoria	230,077	39,155,940,482	5,022,381,103	23.77%	\$ 119,153.28	99,276	22.13%	\$ 110,923.23
View Royal	26,706	4,530,996,060	506,524,168	2.40%	\$ 12,017.01	13,147	2.93%	\$ 14,689.43
Juan de Fuca	15,235	3,227,757,288	369,767,091	1.75%	\$ 8,772.52	5,784	1.29%	\$ 6,462.59
Salt Spring Island	29,983	6,642,742,169	695,133,309	3.29%	\$ 16,491.66	12,075	2.69%	\$ 13,491.66
Southern Gulf Islands	19,326	5,360,161,544	550,966,010	2.61%	\$ 13,071.37	5,598	1.25%	\$ 6,254.77
Total potential annual costs	\$1,002,367	184,598,003,168	21,125,183,964	100.00%	\$ 501,184	448,558	100.00%	\$ 501,184

Bylaw 4602 rate on assessed values \$0.00543 /000

Potential annual assessment c21xc23 \$ 1,002,367

50% of annual assessment \$ 501,184

50% by converted assessment

50% by population

Notes about the draft bylaw

- The allowable charge to the municipalities would be the greater of \$1,000,000 or a mill rate .00543% on the assessed values. the maximum can be Using the 2024 assessed values this means \$1,002,367 in 2025
- The allocation of the \$1,002,367 between the municipalities is planned to be:
 - 50% (\$501,184) allocated by the ratio of the "converted vales" - see below
 - 50% (\$501,184) by the ratio of the residential population
- Converted values.

In some cases charges to municipalities are based on "converted values" instead of assessed values. To arrive at the converted values based on "converted values" instead of assessed values. To arrive at the converted values apply rate in the Converted Value Percentages Regulation at

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/371_2003

The converted values used here came from the CRD