

Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin,
#2-4401 William Head Road,
RR#1, Victoria, BC. V9C 3Y6.

Hon. Lana Popham,
Minister of Agriculture,
Room 325, Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, V8V 1X4.

Dear Minister,

10 April 2017

Re: Your request for opinion on matters regarding the Agricultural Land Reserve

The Association for Protection of Rural Metchosin (APRM) was founded to maintain the rural character of this municipality on the western side of Victoria. A feature of Metchosin is the number of small farms which contribute greatly to the ambience of the municipality.

The nature of the terrain has restricted the ALR land to the coastal area and some of the valley bottoms. The pattern of historic settlement has resulted in the ALR land, apart from a few exceptions, typically being located in properties of 5 acres or else. Our recommendations relate to the consequences of this situation.

Recommendation 1

Your government maintain and strengthen the protection of agricultural land in BC.

Recommendation 2

The government prohibit the use of ALR land for the production of marijuana. The large enclosed facilities required should be located on land zoned for industrial use.

Recommendation 3

The government, through legislation, set limits on house and farm building sizes on ALR land. This is crucially important where the properties are small, as in Metchosin, to prevent the building of “monster homes” of a size unrelated to the agricultural potential of the property, and really being a form of suburbanization.

The APRM recommends that for properties of 10 acres or less that the house footprint be limited to 2000 sq ft and that for ancillary buildings such as barns be limited to 5000 sq ft in total.

Recommendation 4

Metchosin has had problems with landowners requesting permits to place fill on their ALR land claiming this as part of their “right to farm”. In a recent case permission was given by the District of Metchosin, allegedly with the agreement of the Agricultural Land Commission, to place up to 15m of fill on a parcel of ALR land, thus ruining the agricultural potential of the soil which had led to its ALR designation. To make matters worse the fill was not clean.

The APRM therefore recommends that the legislation and regulations regarding the placement of fill on ALR lands be tightened to ensure that the agricultural potential of the land is not lost as a result of the fill.

Recommendation 5

At present “right to farm” legislation allows farmers to ignore the riparian zone regulations set by government. It is recommended that this exclusion be reviewed, and preferably constrained, given the ecological values of riparian zones and the current problems existing with salmon and other fish stocks.

The APRM appreciates the opportunity to contribute to your review.

Yours truly,

J.Burgis, President