Attachment 6 (Update Since the June 24, 2025, Board Meeting)
Area Director Comments

Regarding : 1860 Spring Place – PL2025 – 050 – Inclusion Application

As a member of the Agriculture Committee and the Electoral Area Director for Area F, I attended the property of Mr. Cleaver at 1860 Spring Place, Errington, BC on April 10, 2025.

At that time, Mr. Cleaver advised that the proposed lager beer processing operation would be a very small-scale endeavor, intended primarily to provide his daughter's spouse with a project when they relocate to the area. During my visit, I was shown a small plot of planted hops. The property itself is heavily treed and currently contains two large homes and a mobile home.

Based on the information provided during that site visit, it appeared that the impact of this business would be minimal, and I supported the proposal.

However, at a subsequent Agriculture Committee meeting, Ms. Cleaver (who is to be involved in the operation) presented a significantly different vision. She indicated plans to grow the business, expand to a larger ALR property in the future, and referenced tourism ventures, such as helicopter tours and tasting rooms, similar to those in the Okanagan. When asked about water usage and contamination mitigation, Ms. Cleaver stated they would truck water in or capture rainwater, with no plans to use water from the aquifer. Given that lager production requires significant water volumes, I found this concerning, especially as Aquifer 220 in this area is already designated as declining. Additionally, Ms. Cleaver did not present a water management plan to address potential contamination risks to the Englishman River, which is a critical water source for Area F, Area G, the City of Parksville, and Area E.

In addition, the subject property is located in a subdivision known as rocky habitat with shallow soil depth. A significant amount of trucked in soil will be required in order to grow a garden or crops. Further, the road to access this property is a narrow paved road (Englishman River Road) and the Cleavers are off the paved road on a dirt road (Spring Place), located above the Englishman River. The extensive modification of this property in order to achieve a higher crop yield as per Ms. Cleaver's long term vision will be a difficult and costly proposition.

At the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC), Ms. Cleaver appeared again, this time stating the business would remain a small-scale operation without plans for expansion. Despite this, the request for ALR inclusion was not supported by the committee. Subsequently, at the RDN Board meeting, Ms. Cleaver once again presented new and evolving ideas for the business. When questioned about effluent management—including kettle trub, diluted wort, brew washings, grains, hops, and cleaning agents —she did not provide mitigation measures for the risk of these materials entering the groundwater or the nearby Englishman River in the event of a septic system failure. Additionally, when I noted that ALR regulations allow for one primary residence and one secondary dwelling of no more than 980 sq. ft., she responded that she believed the multiple existing homes on the property would be "grandfathered," though no formal confirmation was provided.

Given these concerns, I can no longer support this ALR inclusion request. The proposal has changed multiple times, and it is evident that Mr. Cleaver, the property owner, may not have been fully aware of his daughter's broader plans for the site. Furthermore, Ms. Cleaver has not presented an effluent mitigation strategy to safeguard the aquifer and the river system.

I have advised Ms. Cleaver that there is an established farm several miles from her home, which has been operating successfully for over 50 years and may offer lease opportunities to support the start of her venture. This location, situated in a more suitable area, could better accommodate her plans without risking the local aquifer or water sources.

Kind regards,

Leanne Salter
Director, Electoral Area F
Regional District of Nanaimo