



August 19, 2024

File: 0280-30

Ref: 203109

Their Worship Mayor Rob Douglas and Councillors
Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 Trans-Canada Hwy
Duncan, BC V9L 6A1
Terri.brennan@northcowichan.ca

Dear Mayor Douglas and Council:

Thank you for your letter dated July 22, 2024, regarding a request for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Ministry) to conduct an Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) in the Cowichan Valley.

Congratulations on convening a new Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). AACs are an effective way for local governments to connect with their farming community and are highly valued by the Ministry. I am pleased to hear that the AAC is undertaking a comprehensive update to the existing 2001 Strategic Agricultural Plan.

Regarding ALUIs, an ALUI was completed in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and other member local governments, including the Municipality of North Cowichan (Municipality) in 2012. The main objective was to develop an agricultural water demand model. As such, the Ministry did not produce a standard ALUI report for publication, but the resulting ALUI data was provided to CVRD (and other member local governments that requested it) in June 2013 along with an Agricultural Water Demand report. Additionally, summary statistics and maps associated with the ALUI were produced and shared with CVRD and the Municipality.

In 2023, Ministry staff conducted an ALUI in the Koksilah River Watershed within the Cowichan Valley that once again focused on agricultural water demand modeling. This project encompassed 4,625 hectares of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR); ~ 25 percent of CVRD's total ALR. An 'internal' online web map and dashboard for CVRD staff is under development which will display the 2023 and 2012 ALUI data for this area.

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The area of the Cowichan Valley outside of Koksilah River Watershed is scheduled for an ALUI in 2026. Ministry staff intend to engage CVRD and other member local governments staff in early 2025 regarding planned ALUR work in 2026.

Once again, thank you for writing me and your interest in the Ministry's ALUI program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam Alexis". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Honourable Pam Alexis
Minister

cc: Joe Fernandez, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Lake Cowichan
Allison McCarrick, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Ladysmith
Danielle Myles-Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer, Cowichan Valley Regional District
North Cowichan Council
Chris Osborne, Planning Manager (Agricultural Advisory Committee staff liaison), North
Cowichan
Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer, North Cowichan
Amanda Young, Director of Planning & Building, North Cowichan

July 22, 2024

The Honorable Pam Alexis
Ministry of Agriculture and Food
PO Box 9043 Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

via email: AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Alexis,

Re: Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) request for the Cowichan Valley

I am pleased to inform you that the Municipality of North Cowichan has convened a new Agricultural Advisory Committee, with the inaugural meeting having taken place on April 23, 2024. Ministry staff attended this meeting and provided useful information regarding provincial support and resources for local agricultural committees.

The most significant item on the Committee's workplan is a comprehensive update and rewrite of our 2001 Strategic Agricultural Plan (SAP), which is an identified project within our 2022 Official Community Plan. Council will likely consider resourcing this during its budget process in fall 2024, with a view to working on the SAP revision throughout 2025. It is our expectation that the revised SAP will also contain mechanisms for the funding and deployment of our municipal Agricultural Reserve Fund.

We are aware of the Provincial [Agricultural Land Use Inventory \(ALUI\) program](#) which collects valuable data on the land uses and coverage of agricultural land, in order to assist local land use planning and agricultural policy efforts that strengthen farming. While a number of areas on Vancouver Island have benefited from [previous ALUIs](#), no such inventory has been completed for the Cowichan Valley, despite this being one of the largest and most agriculturally productive areas on Vancouver Island.

I am therefore requesting, on behalf of Council and the Agricultural Advisory Committee, that the Ministry conduct an ALUI in the Cowichan Valley at the earliest opportunity. The data from an ALUI will be invaluable in supporting the work of the Committee and provide essential baseline information to inform the update of our SAP. The ALUI will also be just as valuable to the agricultural planning efforts of the Cowichan Valley Regional District and other member local governments, namely, the Town of Ladysmith, and the Town of Lake Cowichan.

If there is any further information, we can provide to help facilitate an ALUI being programmed for our area, please do not hesitate to contact North Cowichan staff (copied on this letter). Thank you for

considering this request. We look forward to working with the Ministry over the coming years to strengthen agriculture and farming in the Cowichan Valley region.

Sincerely



Rob Douglas

Mayor

cc: Joe Fernandez, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Lake Cowichan
Allison McCarrick, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Ladysmith
Danielle Myles-Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer, Cowichan Valley Regional District
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