

Wording of the petition:

We, the undersigned, citizens of the City of Richmond, are concerned about the threat to our Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

The recent decision of Richmond City Council to allow mega-mansions to build up to 10,794 square feet (1,000 square metres) is double the provincial recommended maximum size, and nearly triple the maximum recommended size per City staff recommendations. Provincial guidelines specifically state that house sizes on ALR lots should be sized appropriately to divert development to city lots. As the current bylaws stand, large home development is diverted onto farmland.

We petition the City of Richmond to:

- Implement a moratorium on new applications to build on ALR lots until;
- A maximum house size of 5,382 square feet (500 square metres) is expediently adopted as bylaw.

Support to date:

We are collecting signatures both online and on paper and have reached nearly 4,000 signatures, most of which are of Richmond residents. Of nearly 1000 responses at the door, only three declined to sign for the reason that they do not sign anything at the door, but did indicate general support for protecting farmland. Of the remainder, everyone was eager for smaller house size on ALR, some people even grabbing the clipboard to sign as soon as they heard "reduced house sizes on farmland". Some responses were that the Ministry of Agriculture guidelines should be followed which stipulates a maximum house size no larger than the average of the adjacent urban neighbourhoods. The bottom line is that there is an incredible amount of support for 500m² as a maximum house size on ALR, with additional responses that even 500m² is too big.

Comments:

Agricultural land used for its intended purpose is an important aspect of our local economy.

It's no hardship to live in a 5400 square foot house.

Farm land is for farming, not mansions and/or un-regulated hotels

Does the next generation plan to give up eating? Why oh why are we still talking about this anyway?

This is another egregious assault by developers on land use. Our society, especially in BC is being hollowed out by the commodification of land and housing.

Enough is enough!!! I am fed up with this blatant misuse of agricultural land!

There is absolutely no valid reason for a 1000 m2 "farm house". It is a scam to build a personal mansion, a B & B, escape taxes, etc. Richmond council has no good reason not to follow the Provincial standards - i.e. 500 m2.

We need to protect our farmland for the future. BC needs to become self-sustaining with all of our food. Agricultural land should not be allowed to be used for wealthy estate-living.

This is some of the best agricultural land in the world and it is being threatened. Houses like this break up farm land and make farming less viable. Keep the ALR for farming and build on your monster houses where they should be...in residential zones.

This farmland is held for our children's future. Not to be turned into residential property.

Closing:

In closing, thank you for your time tonight. From our discussions with hundreds of Richmond residents over the last weeks, we heard a range of emotions regarding the erosion of farmland: anger, cynicism, disgust, resignation, fatigue, sadness. No one expressed hope that farmland would be preserved, while many were open about possibly leaving Richmond due to development excesses, such as megahouses on farmland.

With Council asking for additional review of the ALR house bylaw, we think now is the time to give our residents hope and demonstrate leadership that will resonate throughout the region. You are uniquely positioned to be a catalyst for change and to wisely steward the resources we will all need in the years to come. Thank you.