



## Council Member Motion

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 *(time sensitive)*

---

**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Date:** January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**From:** Councillor Gardiner

**Subject:** CRD Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw

---

### BACKGROUND:

Councillors have received e-mails about Alternate Approval Process (AAP) initiatives being carried out throughout the Region.

Appeals for review of one specific CRD initiative have been made to Councillors, with the first email I recall dated January 15. The content of the appeal gave me great concern about the AAP process and the initiative itself. It is for that reason that this Council Member Motion recommends that City of Victoria CRD Directors press the pause button on this initiative.

The CRD initiative being questioned is the Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2024.

The most fulsome submission was made by Jason Austin, a City of Victoria taxpayer who had some involvement with our continuing Council, having served on a Mayor's Task Force on Downtown Disturbances some years ago. He is Certified Professional Accountant and a farmer who also owns commercial property in the City.

*In his words "I am a retired CPA and I have Gatton Farm in Central Saanich. We (my volunteers and I) are the largest provider of fresh produce to the food banks in the Capital Region. We donate all our produce to the food banks, averaging 40,000lbs a year. We serve Our Place, Rainbow Kitchen, Women's Transition House, Burnside-Gorge, Community Food Support, Fairfield-Gonzales, St John the Divine, Fernwood Community, Oaklands Community & Saanich Baptist. So I can speak to food security . . . "*

Mr Austin's plea is to have the CRD alter the path it is on regarding its Foodlands Access Services Establishment initiative. To consult with the farming community and municipalities, to have a public discussion that includes information on options and evidence, and costs and benefits to farmers. (see Appendix A)

Information provided to me by CRD staff confirms Mr Austin's estimates of financial contributions from municipalities. While the estimated budget for the first year pilot project at Bear Hill Regional Park would be \$320,000, the maximum requisition in subsequent years is set at \$1 million. The City's share of the requisition would be about \$250,000 going forward.

The information provided to Councillors, particularly by Mr Austin, speaks of a 2019 attempt to establish a similar program. The information he provided speaks of misinformation, misinterpretation of data, and non-supported assertions. The municipalities declined that program at that time. Early this week, the Councils of North Saanich and Central Saanich, municipalities with significant farmlands, spoke of their unease with this proposed program. (see Appendix B)

A supplementary question to ponder is this, why is the City of Victoria, through its Directors to the CRD, willing to participate in this initiative? It is not farms within the city of Victoria that would be affected.

Does the majority on this Council think this city should be either financing this initiative or telling the farming communities on the peninsula how to farm?

**TIME SENSITIVE:**

There is only one remaining COTW meeting prior to the CRD Board meeting of February 12, at which the Alternative Approval Process results and the adoption of Bylaw No. 4602 “Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2024 are to be discussed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council request the Mayor and any other Victoria CRD Director(s) attending the next Capital Regional District Board meeting to voice the City of Victoria’s opposition to the adoption of Bylaw No. 4602 “Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2024”.

Further, that this Motion be considered at the Council meeting of February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Gardiner

**Attachments:**

Appendix A\_CRD Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw

Appendix B\_CRD Foodlands Access Service Establishment Bylaw