

Sent via email to Peninsula News Review, June 28, 2008

Dear PNR,

I am extremely disturbed by the very serious regional implications of Central Saanich District Administrator's announcement at the public meeting on June 18th, that the District will seek to change its OCP regional context statement (RCS).

Contrary to many previous statements by the Administrator, the District came to the realization in early June of 2008, that the proposed Senanus waterline is not allowable under the Official Community Plan Bylaw. As a rural area, it is far outside of the District's urban containment zone, and is zoned A-1 and RE-3 for rural services: municipal services are not provided to these zoning designations. District memos and reports state that up to 127 new lots and homes could be serviced as a result of the proposal, and the District has not followed earlier professional recommendations made that would have seen any legitimate Senanus water problems solved using local cost-effective and environmentally friendly methods, such as use of the plentiful on-site local springs, putting an end to mismanagement of storm and ground water, and putting much-needed conservation measures in place at these very large waterfront mansion homes.

Instead, the District is planning to revise the Regional Context Statement (RCS) of its Official Community Plan, with the intent of allowing this and future Councils to install infrastructure outside the Urban Containment area whenever desired, simply via Council resolution. This would eliminate the current requirement for unanimous approval of urban containment amendments by CRD municipalities through the CRD Regional Growth Strategy Amendment Process. If one municipality does this, other regional municipalities can follow suit, facilitating similar OCP RCS changes. Should Central Saanich's plan be successful, the doors will be wide open for sprawl and loss our rural lands.

Long term planning puts urban containment boundaries in place to protect rural lands in perpetuity. Without them, we seriously fetter the ability of future generations to plan for their own food security and other land use needs. Ignoring the intent and principles of our own urban containment boundaries renders these protections meaningless, both locally and regionally, and sets a very dangerous negative precedent for the CRD RGS. Not considering regional implications of a fundamental amendment to an important OCP principle is not thoughtful planning. I urge everyone to speak out at OCP hearings on this issue, and to write letters to the District of Central Saanich opposing this plan.

Yours Truly,

Lori Waters, MFA, MScBMC