



March 30, 2015

Clark County Board of Councilors
P.O. Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

For the Public Record

Dear Councilors,

As a Clark County taxpayer of three homes, an apartment complex and numerous land parcels, we have a strong vested financial interest in our county and our community. The same is true for many thousands of rural landowners that CCCU represents. For the last 20 years, I and my counterparts have been ignored by county government, in favor of the city of Vancouver and Portland. Our lands have been frozen in time and set aside for someone else to use, enjoy and benefit financially, while we pay the bill. There is a major flaw in this concept that needs to be rectified.

I believe that each of you three councilors attained your positions because the rural voters supported you. Their vote does and did count and they chose you to lead them out of this rural recession and deep freeze. The Ridgefield Open House hosted by the county last Wednesday, was a prime example of kind, thoughtful, and professional rural landowners and taxpayers, wanting to be a part of the process and wanting to help to make good policy. There was no yelling, shouting or ill manners, only serious people considering a serious problem. It is unfortunate that staff was unable to recognize the need for major changes in the rural lands in the past. But, it is most fortunate the councilors could see merit in such a policy, with the 20 year update. They saw the concerns being voiced by landowners and are showing the willingness to learn and consider major changes. The Alternative 4 proposal was well received by the voters attending the open house and perhaps the staff can now see the merit in making these important major changes demonstrated by Alternative 4. The proposal is certainly not returning all of the development and vesting rights that landowners lost in the 1994 Plan and it certainly is not going to repay them for those losses. The landowners have agreed to major compromises within Alternative 4. But, it is a concept that landowners could support, provided that what has been displayed for review at the open houses, plus appropriate corrections, will go forward in the SEIS and later be adopted by the Councilors in the end.

We were a robust economy before the GMA and the 1994 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Since it's adoption, things have not gone well for the rural and resource communities. The same is true for this county or other counties in the state. Planning for the future is important, as all rural landowners are keenly aware. But, the negative impact of the 1994 Plan has been overwhelming and expensive for everyone, especially the rural and resource landowners. The 1994 Plan is obsolete and has not brought the economic prosperity that was envisioned at the time of it's adoption.

An elderly man stopped by our land, wanting to show his grandson the old 1913 homestead that remains on our property. The house was built by a Mr. Wedin, who was one of the original pioneers who came to our area. This man used to live in the old house and as he walked around, he was excited to tell his grandson the history of his life in the old home. He talked about helping his father build the barn and what it was like living there. When we first bought the property, we also lived in the old house until we could afford to build a new one. My children have many happy memories from that experience. I've furnished the home with old historical items from days past by in our area. And now our grandchildren play around the house and wonder at it's contents and history. In reality, what you see in the rural and resource lands is not urban sprawl at all. It has more to do with family. It's really the past, present and hopefully the future of rural and resource families and family heritage, which the Growth Management Act embraces.

We ask this Board of Councilors to also embrace these proposed changes to the rural and resource lands, that will recognize the development, culture and heritage of the rural and resource lands. Doing so will allow a more fair and balanced approach to land use planning in Clark County.

Sincerely, *Carol Levanen*

Carol Levanen, Ex. Secretary
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