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Mr. MacEwan:

Thank you for your email of January 11th proposing the circulation of a questionnaire to all KCFA members. We appreciate that the MOK is considering the input of the farming industry on agricultural land use planning. Representatives of the Board of the KCFA would be happy to meet to discuss these issues with you.

We have a number of concerns regarding the proposed questionnaire. Firstly, the closed target audience and the perhaps anonymous nature of a questionnaire seems to move what has been and what should be an open and public discussion of land use issues behind closed doors. The consultations and discussions which have characterized the Kings 2050 process have allowed all citizens including farmers to express their vision of land use in Kings County for the decades ahead.

Under this process farmers had an opportunity to consider the first draft MPS and to publicly contribute to the discussion. Many farmers have taken part in this process, both personally and collectively, through events such as the Kings Agricultural Forum organized by the MOK, and presentations / consultations made by county staff to interested community groups including members of KCFA. The Board of Directors of KCFA also took the time in spring of 2015 to consult with its members and to write a thorough position paper in response to the draft MPS.

We are concerned that in asking a new set of questions all the previous opinions and viewpoints expressed by farmers individually and collectively during the Kings 2050 process are being discarded.

We are concerned that there is no public document, no 2nd draft MPS, no statements of goals and principles, from which the questions arise and which farmers and the wider public are able to view and comment upon.

It is proposed that the questionnaire be prepared by the MOK alone. This is concerning as the nature and the quality of the questions posed, can have significant influence on the responses provided. You will recall in our last letter in response to the staff presentation at our AGM we expressed our opinion that the right questions were not being asked. i.e. the question should not be which lot size should be sacrificed to development, the correct question is how do we best protect farmland and direct development to urban centres and non-agricultural lands.

It is proposed that the answers to the questionnaire be collected, compiled, and controlled by the MOK. We are concerned that some responses may be emphasized over others to claim the support of the agricultural community for certain opinions.

Perhaps most importantly, in this process which is to govern land use for decades it should not simply be the interests and views of current farmers that should be decisive. The future farmers and future citizens who will need our farmlands intact for future economic prosperity and food security should remain the foremost consideration in this discussion.

Sincerely

*VIA email*

Allan Melvin  
President, Kings County Federation of Agriculture