

The Watchdog Bulletin



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Nicholas Simons, MLA, and Townsite Ratepayers President, Andy Davis

MLA SIMONS VOICES CONCERNS ABOUT CITY'S ALR APPLICATION

Local MLA Nicholas Simons (NDP) has called on the Agricultural Land Commission to hold its own hearing in light of the enormity of the City of Powell River's application for the removal of 927 acres of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve.

The City of Powell River held its own hearing on the application on September 19th, but a vast number of attendees felt the hearing had been 'scripted' by the City and that Councillor Bob Astrope had exhibited bias while chairing the meeting. Astrope is a Director of the PR Waterfront Development Corporation, wholly-owned by the City, and the City's representative in the 'joint venture', PRSC – the party which is seeking removal of the ALR land.

Simons advised it is within the purview of the ALC to hold their own hearing on a removal application. He suggested citizens concerned about this issue write letters to the ALC asking it to hold their own hearing.

Appearing at the October 19th meeting of the Townsite Ratepayers, Simons spoke at length about the Agricultural Land Reserve to an audience of more than 50 people. In

addition to Townsite Ratepayers members, representatives from the Cranberry Ratepayers, the Wildwood Ratepayers, the Council of Canadians, the Sierra Club, the local NDP organization, and the Catalyst Paper Company were in attendance.

Simons explained how in 1973, the then-NDP government introduced, and the legislature enacted, the BC's Land Commission Act on April 18, 1973. This act set up the Agricultural Land Commission in an attempt to limit the serious erosion of our agricultural land base.

Given the NDP's strong support of the principles behind the Agricultural Land Reserve, MLA Simons stated he would make every effort to ensure that the proper procedures would be followed by the Agricultural Land Commission in reviewing the application by the City of Powell River.

He also stated that this was an issue he would raise within the NDP caucus and informed the audience of the NDP's recent successful efforts, lead by NDP Opposition Agriculture and Land critic, MLA Corky Evans, to prevent over 400 hectares of farmland located on Barnston Island from being removed from the ALR.

Important Stories in Our Community

- *MLA Simons calls for Agricultural Land Commission to hold its own hearing*
- *Catalyst to cut paper production next year*
- *More ALR Info*

"It is within the purview of the ALC to hold their own hearing on a removal application."

MLA Nicholas Simons will be in Powell River again this week at the Powell River NDP Club meeting on Thursday, Nov. 2nd at 7 pm at the Union Hall, across from Dwight Hall in Townsite. Everyone is welcome. nicholas.simons.mla@leg.bc.ca

Letters to the ALC asking them to hold their own hearing on the City's application should be sent to:

Agricultural Land Commission
133-4940 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 4K6

Email MLA Corky Evans, opposition critic for Agriculture and Land, and NDP Leader MLA Carole James and ask them to get involved in this issue:

corky.evans.mla@leg.bc.ca

carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca

Catalyst to Cut Production

Newsprint demand in key U.S. market continued to fall

Canadian Press, Published: October 28, 2006

VANCOUVER (CP) – Catalyst Paper Corp. (TSX:CTL) plans to cut its newsprint production by more than 10 per cent in 2007, CEO Russell Horner said Friday.

"While I believe newsprint will always form part of our portfolio, we have been on a constant program of reducing our exposure to newsprint," Horner told a conference call with analysts.

"In 2007, we will only have one paper machine in the company fully dedicated to newsprint."

"We expect the pulp market to remain strong for the balance of the year and probably into next year, but that's about as far ahead as anyone can predict pulp."

However, while newsprint prices rose slightly in the quarter, consumption and demand in the key United States market continued to fall, the company said.

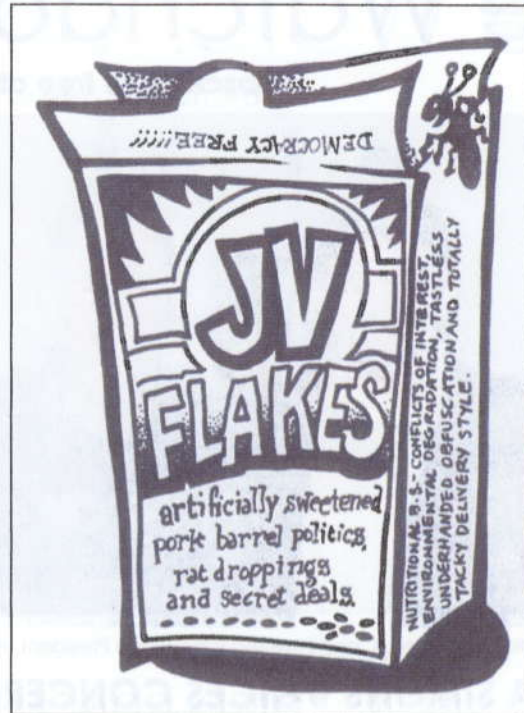
Catalyst has an annual production capacity of 701,000 tonnes and produces newsprint on five of its 11 paper machines.

Newsprint sales accounted for about 27 per cent of its consolidated sales revenue for the first nine months of 2006 with 85 per cent of its sales volumes to customers in North America and Asia.

During the quarter, the company said it spent \$2.2 million dealing with an offer by New York investment firm Third Avenue Management LLC to increase its stake in the company.

Catalyst's board recommended against the tender offer but cancelled a shareholder rights plan that would have blocked Third Avenue, allowing shareholders to decide for themselves.

Third Avenue said earlier this week it succeeded in its bid for 39 million shares, or 18.2 per cent of Catalyst. The purchase increases its stake in the company to 37.97 per cent.



Taxpayer Ant says: "This is no picnic! Time to start thinking outside the box." (Cartoon by Lyla)

FACTS ABOUT THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

The purpose of the Agricultural Land Commission, in addition to administering the Agricultural Land Reserve, is

- to preserve agricultural land;
 - to encourage farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
 - to encourage local governments, First Nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.
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- The ALR comprises 5% of the province (approx. 4.7 million hectares).
 - Agricultural activities (as defined by the ALC) include the growing of plants for fiber and fuels (including wood).
 - New innovations allow for agricultural production on agricultural land once deemed too limited or unsuited for producing specific products.

NDP STATEMENT ON THE ALR: The Agricultural Land Reserve is one of the enduring legacies of B.C.'s first NDP government. Its advocates say it not only preserved farmland but also played a central role in encouraging compact, transit-friendly development in the Lower Mainland. . . . The NDP platform promises to renew the ALR mandate and ensure that the ALR's foremost priority is to protect and sustain B.C.'s farmland. The NDP platform also declares that agriculture contributes more than \$2.2 billion to the provincial economy, providing more than half our food needs and generating employment for more than 200,000 British Columbians" and states that 98 percent of B.C. farms are family-owned.