

Petition With Over 1100 Signatures Presented To Council to Support ALR Inclusion of Southlands

Written by

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At Tuesday's Public Hearing, Southlands the Facts, presented a petition with over 1100 signatures indicating support for the application to return the Southlands to the ALR. The on-line petition was launched on Friday, February 18th and support has poured in from citizens of Delta as well as throughout BC and Canada.

During the commencement of the Public Hearing on March 1st, all speakers expressed support for the application to return the Southlands for the ALR. The speakers included Arzeena Hamir, renowned agrologist and Coordinator of the Richmond Food Security Society, who talked about the quality of soil on the Southlands and the opportunity to use this land to help train future farmers. With a remaining list of over 80 speakers the Public Hearing is scheduled to continue Wednesday, March 2 (7:00 pm, South Delta Recreation Centre).

The Public Hearing represents a long line of contentious meetings regarding the Southlands. This piece of farmland was the cause of the longest public hearing in Commonwealth history and a resident run plebiscite in 1989, which prevented a 2000 unit development that was proposed for the same property.

"Given what we know about the issues of food security, I cannot understand why anyone would not want to protect our current agricultural resources" stated Dana Maslovat, one of the organizers of Southlands the Facts, "Having the Southlands put back in the ALR would provide additional protection to ensure the land stays agricultural into the future."

The Southlands was originally in the ALR, but was removed by a Provincial Order-in-Council in 1981, even though its exclusion was rejected by the Agricultural Land Commission due to the high soil quality. In 1988 an application to change the designation to accommodate 1900 homes was eventually rejected, following the longest public hearing in Commonwealth history.