



July 09, 2020

**Re: Rainbow Ridge Rezoning Application from Cortes Island Seniors Society**

Dear Strathcona Regional District Board and Directors,

We are writing as representatives of 19 non-profit housing and service organizations in the Strathcona Regional District.

The Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness is extremely concerned that the Regional District has not implemented sufficient protocols to allow a virtual public hearing to proceed for the planned Rainbow Ridge housing development on Cortes Island. Delaying alternative provisions for public hearings and suggesting that postponing all public hearings until September is unfathomable considering our region faces one of the most pressing housing crises in the province.

We believe your decision to delay will put investment and urgently needed affordable housing in our region at risk. We must stress the importance of this project for Cortes and the region and ask you to reconsider it.

Cortes Island is one of the most impacted communities within the regional district housing crisis. The Strathcona Community Health Network identified that 29% of the Cortes population spend more than 30% of their income on housing, which is the highest in the whole Strathcona Region. A household is considered at risk of homelessness when 30% or more of the resident's earnings are spent on housing costs, which is why the building of new affordable rental homes for both seniors and families in Rainbow Ridge is critical while the window for provincial funding from BC Housing is still open.

Public hearings are a fundamental activity of local government. We urge the Regional District to make alternative arrangements to allow public hearings to continue as soon as possible. We especially do not want the lack of hearings to jeopardize this urgently needed housing project on Cortes Island.

We know you recognize that the current pandemic is adding additional stress and challenges to communities already struggling to address housing shortages and homelessness. It is incumbent on the SRD to limit adverse impacts wherever possible.

We would welcome the opportunity to cooperate with you to find solutions and a way to move forward.

In community,  
The Leadership Team, Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness