
NANAIMO-CEDAR FARMERS' INSTITUTE
c/o Keith Wyndlow, Corresponding Secretary
13110 Doole Road, Ladysmith, BC, V9G 1G6

Keith Duhaime, P.Ag., President
British Columbia Institute of Agrologists
205 - 733 Johnson Street
Victoria, BC, V8W 3C7

January, 16, 2009

Dear President Duhaime:

RE: ETHICS AND FARM ASSESSMENT REVIEW PANEL SUBMISSION

In its submission to **The Farm Assessment Review Panel** the District "A" Farmers' Institute has included the following Recommendation:

Assessors are often not specialists in farmland or farming techniques which can lead to errors or decisions requiring appeals that frustrate landowners and unnecessarily consume valuable assessment resources. Ther-fore Assessors should have access to a Professional Agrologist as needed and always in the cases of appeals.

The Nanaimo-Cedar Farmers' Institute is concerned about the developments within the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) and the position apparently taken in regard to the ability of Agrologists being allowed to speak out on Agricultural Land Reserve issues. To the lay farmer, who depends on expert, ethical and impartial information, it appears that the BCIA is becoming split between the Agrologists who are proponents of land withdrawal and those who correctly feel their mandate, training and responsibility is to protect farmland. Furthermore it appears that the proponents towards land removal are using the threat of disciplinary and legal action to silence those who express concern about land use decisions when applications for removal come forward.

There is a problem when an association or institute has eight or more of its respected senior members so concerned about a form of censorship that they become signatories to a letter accusing the BCIA of "muzzling". The credibility of the organization's professionalism, integrity and impartiality becomes at risk. Where pecuniary interests enter into the equation they can then become a matter of speculation which is also not beneficial to the public perception of the BCIA.

Wendy Holm's impeccable record of speaking out on many issues for farmers including protecting farmland, the Canadian Wheat Board, and Canada's water supply are laudable and fully supported by the Nanaimo-Cedar Farmers' Institute. There is an eroding away of informed professional people being able to speak publicly without having their comments vetted by some public relations body, whether in Government, Education or Universities, and the public is not being well served by this.

We are of the opinion that, with REASONABLE restraints, *freedom of speech is a fundamental right in a democratic society.* We look forward to your response.

Yours truly,

NANAIMO-CEDAR FARMERS' INSTITUTE
Keith Wyndlow, Corresponding Secretary

pc: Jenny MacLeod, Secretary, District "A" Farmers' Institute