



January 20, 2014

File: 0280-30

Ref: 178705

Laurie Throness, MLA
Chilliwack - Hope
East Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Throness:

Thank you for your recent letters regarding hazelnuts and the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association Tree Fruit Replant Program.

I am aware that hazelnut growers in the Fraser Valley are contending with orchard decline due to Eastern Filbert Blight. I agree that replanting with disease resistant varieties is an important strategy for reversing the decline in hazelnut production in British Columbia.

As you are aware, in January 2013, the Province committed to developing a long-term and sustainable replant program for tree fruits. This program is to help tree fruit growers in British Columbia increase competitiveness and profitability, and to encourage replanting with higher value and more profitable fruit types.

After careful review and consideration, I have concluded that my Ministry cannot offer a similar replant program for hazelnuts at this time. We also cannot meet our current objectives if we extend the existing Tree Fruit Replant Program to include hazelnuts.

I have asked Ministry staff to assist the BC Hazelnut Growers Association in seeking funding from existing programs to undertake further research, demonstration and educational activities. This work could provide additional impetus for growers to replant appropriate varieties and contribute to achieving a long-term resolution of the Eastern Filbert Blight problem. Please contact Mark Sweeney, Industry Specialist - Berries and Nuts, for more information on other programs that may be helpful. Mr. Sweeney can be reached by telephone at (604) 556-3056 or by email at Mark.Sweeney@gov.bc.ca.

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Thank you for your efforts in bringing this issue to my attention.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Pat Pimm
Minister

pc: Mark Sweeney, Industry Specialist
Ministry of Agriculture

Ken Nickel, Director
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**Province of
British Columbia**
Legislative Assembly



Laurie Throness, M.L.A.
Chilliwack-Hope

October 3, 2013

Hon. Pat Pimm
Minister of Agriculture
Legislative Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister:

Re: Hazelnut replant program

Recently I had the opportunity to tour several hazelnut orchards in my riding, which are all suffering from the Eastern Filbert Blight. Hazelnut yields are decreasing over time and in a few years, the trees will be entirely dead.

I would note that the hazelnut is classed, in botanical terms, as a fruit, belonging to the *Betulaceae* or Birch family of trees. Unfortunately, hazelnuts are not currently on the list of eligible fruits in BC's BCFGA Tree Fruit Replant Program.

I would point out that hazelnuts are a profitable industry with great value-added potential. Moreover, climate does not allow hazelnuts to be grown elsewhere in Canada; they are grown almost exclusively in the Fraser Valley.

There are varieties of hazelnut from the US which are resistant to fungus, available at a cost. An experimental replant has already commenced, which is progressing well. There would be real benefit to BC agriculture if BC hazelnut producers could take advantage of the existing Replant Program.

I know that this matter is currently under consideration through Mark Sweeney of your Ministry, and I am writing to lend my keen support to this request. Thank you for your early consideration.

Sincerely,

Laurie Throness

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE			
Referral #	178705		
Refer to:			
Received:	OCT 09 2013		
MIN Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply Direct <input type="checkbox"/>	Info/File <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
DM Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Briefing Note <input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking Notes <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other			