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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 BCFG 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 #	<u>178705</u>
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"/>
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File: 0280-30
Ref: 178830

Linda Larson, MLA
Boundary - Similkameen
East Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Larson:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding additional information on a potential tree fruit replant program and concerns over the impacts of recent weather events in your riding.

The Province is currently developing a replant program to continue helping tree fruit growers in British Columbia after the current program ends. The objective of the next program will be to assist growers achieve long-term sustainability. The details of the program are still under development and we are in contact with the BC Fruit Growers Association.

As you indicate, growers who replanted before the tree fruit replant program was announced in 2012 were not eligible to receive funding. The program did not provide funding for projects completed prior to the funding announcement.

For more information on the tree fruit replant programs I would encourage you to contact Mr. Jim Campbell, Industry Specialist. Mr. Campbell can be reached by telephone at (250) 498-5254 or by email at Jim.G.Campbell@gov.bc.ca.

With respect to damage to fruit trees from summer hail storms, although the losses for some producers were severe, historical Production Insurance data does not indicate that these events were unique in their severity. The Ministry of Agriculture's Business Risk Management (BRM) programs are available to compensate enrolled producers for losses experienced due to weather related damage.

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With regard to accessing additional funding, we do have the AgriRecovery program which can provide support to assist an Agricultural sector to recover from a severe event. We do not, however, have evidence that these recent hail events meet AgriRecovery program guidelines of the Growing Forward 2 agreement. The income losses due to hail are severe but are covered under the Production Insurance and AgriStability programs. More information on the Business Risk Management programs can be viewed at <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/rm/index.htm>.

Thank you for writing and for bringing these matters to my attention.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Pat Pimm
Minister

pc: Ken Nickel, Director
Ministry of Agriculture

Jim Campbell, Industry Specialist
Ministry of Agriculture

Linda Larson, MLA
Boundary - Similkameen



October 18, 2013

Hon. Pat Pimm
Minister of Agriculture
Room 235
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Hi Pat,

I am sending my support for the BCFGA request for the renewal of the replant program. I strongly urge you to make this a long term strategy- a minimum of 5 years out.

The replant of 2012 was not covered and some farmers were adversely affected by the abrupt loss of funding after they had ordered the trees. I hope that you are able to address these replant issues.

My riding in particular experienced an unusual weather pattern just prior to the apple harvest this August. The storm was random but severe. It ruined the apples but also caused damage to the trees themselves. Crop insurance will cover the damage to the fruit but it requires the Province to initiate the "disaster" clause for funding to become available to the growers to cover the loss of the trees. Anything you can do to help the farmers affected would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding what the plan is to help relieve our farmers in their time of need and to ensure the future of their replanting needs.

Sincerely,

Linda Larson, MLA
Boundary-Similkameen

cc: BCFGA

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE			
Referral #	178830		
Refer to:			
Received:	OCT 29 2013		
MIN Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply Direct <input type="checkbox"/>	Info/File <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
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Legislative Assembly**



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

November 6, 2013

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

Dear Minister:

Recently I wrote to you asking that hazelnuts be added to the BC Orchard Replant Program. Hazelnuts are a small but important crop grown in my riding because it is one of the only locations in Canada with a climate appropriate for this fruit. The trees are suffering from Eastern Filbert Blight disease, which has no remedy; the long-term solution can only be to plant resistant and immune varieties.

There is an ongoing provincial Orchard Replant Program, but it does not currently include hazelnuts within its funding parameters. I wrote to you with the request that hazelnuts be included within program definitions so that producers can continue to grow and extract increasing value through further-processing of hazelnuts in the Fraser Valley.

I have since been approached by the Seabird Island First Nation in my constituency, which owns 115 acres (15,500 trees) of Barcelona and Davianna varieties; it is the largest hazelnut orchard in Canada. Given that Seabird is looking for economic development opportunities, I am asking that Seabird be added to the list of growers who could be included in the existing replant program.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

Laurie Throness

cc: Clem Seymour, Chief, Seabird Island Band
Brian Jones, Community Development Manager, Seabird Island Band

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE		
Referral #	178900	
Refer to:		
Received:	NOV 13 2013	
MIN Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply Direct <input type="checkbox"/>	Info/File <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
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AGR-2013-00140		

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

November 6, 2013

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


Dear Minister:

Further to a timely letter received from the City of Chilliwack, I would like to add my voice of concern to the federal Additions to Reserve (ATR) proposal to add to aboriginal reserves close to urban areas.

It would be beneficial for many First Nations to be less geographically isolated. Living closer to urban areas would allow them to more easily avail themselves of opportunities for employment, education, culture, travel, recreation, and other amenities that most Canadians enjoy as a matter of course.

There could be an issue, however, with the Agricultural Land Reserve. I am wondering if your Ministry has engaged with the Federal Government to:

- a) assert the importance of the ALR to the Fraser Valley;
- b) discover the legal standing of the ALR when it comes to the creation of additional reserves;
- c) formalize the protection of BC's agricultural land in the development of ATR policy.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Laurie Throness

cc: Mark Strahl, MP
Hon. John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
John Martin, MLA Chilliwack

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE			
Referral # <u>178907</u>			
Refer to: _____			
Received: NOV 13 2013			
MIN Response <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply Direct <input type="checkbox"/>	Info/File <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
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