

## Re: A Question about LVT

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- *From:* [royls@xxxxxxxx](mailto:royls@xxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* Thu, 18 May 2006 06:04:55 GMT
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On Wed, 17 May 2006 20:16:14 GMT, Michael Scheltgen  
<mjs818@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

royls@xxxxxxxx wrote:

On Wed, 17 May 2006 11:01:37 GMT, Michael Scheltgen  
<mjs818@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Hi Roy, What do you think of the agricultural land reserve  
here  
in BC? Thanks.

Hate it. It's basically a band-aid measure to prevent sprawl that  
would not happen if the land rent was not being given away to  
landowners for doing nothing. It's also, of course, a big factor in  
corruption of civic governments and local planning, and in the chronic  
insane housing costs in BC.

I agree with you. How would you knock down the arguments below?

From the SmartGrowthBC webpage:  
[http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index.cfm?Group\\_ID=3404](http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index.cfm?Group_ID=3404)

Protecting scarce agricultural land is a key smart growth  
strategy for a number of reasons.

\* Farmland provides natural capital and a source of local  
economic opportunities.

"Natural capital" is an oxymoron. And whoever thinks that blocking  
more productive uses of land makes it "a source of local economic  
opportunities" for anyone but rent seekers and land speculators is a  
regular moron.

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A healthy agricultural sector helps diversify the provincial economy, supporting the livelihood of over two hundred thousand British Columbians.

Oddly enough, jurisdictions that don't have ALRs also seem to have diverse economies and healthy agricultural sectors.

And most of them don't have housing prices calculated to keep working people in thrall to mortgage lenders their entire lives.

\* Agricultural products increase our food security and supply and reduce our dependence on imported foods and therefore associated costs and impacts.

?? BC is coastal, so it is hard to see how its food security and supply could be threatened: it can import food cheaply from anywhere on the Pacific Rim, and has its own fishery resource, too. And the biggest increase in BC's domestic food production has been in the hothouse sector, which does not even need agricultural land (but uses it anyway because it is cheaper, being frozen in the ALR!).

The amount of money BC consumers save by using domestic agricultural products (if any) is orders of magnitude less than the amount wasted on higher housing and commercial real estate costs due to the artificial land shortage.

\* Diverse farmlands create a variety of wildlife habitats and support bio-diversity.

It would be interesting to see some evidence for this claim, especially as pesticide use on farms is a major destroyer of wildlife and biodiversity, and hothouse developments explicitly eliminate local wildlife habitats and biodiversity.

\* Open, green spaces near urban areas are a valuable resource, adding amenity value and providing scenic landscapes, recreation opportunities, and contribute to our enjoyment of BC's expansive outdoors.

BC is mountainous. As such, it has an immense amount of open green space near every one of its urban areas, green space that is of no agricultural value and is typically too steep for high-density development, but is scenic, provides recreation opportunities, etc. The notion that farmland adds any significant measure to this open

space is ludicrous.

\* The agricultural land reserve has acted as an effective urban growth boundary protecting against development and urban sprawl since its legislation was created in 1973.

That is just a flat-out lie, as aerial photographs of the Lower Mainland from the early 70s and recent years prove. The ALR has mainly shoveled unearned billions into the pockets of certain favored landowners and developers, and robbed ordinary people of the fruits of their labor through sky-high rents, house prices and mortgage interest.

The BC ALR is a sacred cow not because of any such effect as claimed above, but purely because it shovels unearned wealth into the pockets of landowners; and people who own only the land under their own dwellings are stupid and ignorant enough to believe that this massive theft is in their interests.

— Roy L

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