

Posted by Joan Russow
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Submission on Bill 24: the Agricultural Land Commission Act

Joan Russow PhD

Global Compliance Research Project

Premier Clark fails to recognize that reducing the land base in the ALR will impact on the BC policies related to ``putting families first`` and related to ``protecting farm land and farming families``. The BC government`s proposal of reducing farm land in the ALR is out of sync with embracing the important concepts of food security, food sovereignty, precautionary principle and the rights of future generations

BILL 24 APPEARS TO CONTRADICT KEY BC GOVERNMENT PRIORTIES

Reducing the ALR does not put ``families first or`` conserve farm land`` and support farming families

On March 11, 2014 Premier Clarks announced the policy of Putting Families First`` She stated our government has made significant progress on putting families first, and **we will do more**. Surely the ``more`` that she mentioned should have been the expanding of the ALR to ensure that families have the right to an unadulterated, organically grown locally based food supply.

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On April 11 2014 "Premier Christy Clark stated "The protection of farmland and support for farming families is a priority for this government". There appears to be a clear disconnect between her stated goals and her proposed policy of reducing the land base of the ALR.

□ BILL 24 WOULD REDUCE FOOD SECURITY □ WHICH HAS BECOME A MAJOR GLOBAL PRIORITY

It was with great foresight that the agricultural land reserve was created. More and more citizens want to grow food and buy locally and also establish GE free zones.. Now with lack of foresight on the forty first anniversary of the ALR, the BC government is proposing not an increase but a decrease in food security

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing:

"When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences...

Food security is built on three pillars:

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- Food availability: sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
 - Food access: having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.
 - Food use: appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

A reservation was also expressed about the impacts of globalization

...Globalization may - or may not - lead to the persistence of food insecurity and poverty in rural communities.

With the increase in support for the 100 mile diet and buying local produce, it is unfortunate that the BC government should cause citizens to possibly be more and more dependent on the importation of food.

BILL 24 APPEARS TO SACRIFICE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

La Via campesina defined Food sovereignty as

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The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems

Food Secure Canada's policy platform, [*Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada*](#), provides a detailed account of what food Sovereignty is

Food Sovereignty

The people's food policy is based on the principles of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty calls for a fundamental shift in focus from food as a commodity to food as a public good. As such it can once again assume its central role in strengthening communities, ecosystems and economies

Food sovereignty was first proposed by La Campesina- the global movement co – founded by the Canadian Farmer's Union at the world food summit in 1996. It has since been defined through an international consensus process:

The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems

The language of food sovereignty as distinct from food security in being explicit about food citizenship; it emphasized that people must have a say in how their food is produced and where it comes from. The core of food sovereignty is reclaiming public decision making power in the

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food system

While the BC government is giving citizens the opportunity to make submissions about Bill 24, the question remains will the government actually listen and address citizens' concerns, and act on the recommendations made by citizens

BILL 24 IGNORES THE NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its latest report stated the following:

IPCC AR5 2014 WG2

Global warming induced [heat waves](#) , [drought](#) , and flooding constitute a global food security emergency ☐ for us all today, ☐ to protect our near and long term future food security☐ - the world's top food producing regions of the temperate Northern hemisphere ☐ are now global warming & climate change vulnerable.

Without adaptation local temperature increases of 1.0C (global average also 1.0C) above pre-industrial☐ are projected to negatively impact yields for major crops (wheat rice and maize) in tropical and temperate regions.

☐☐ With or without adaptation, negative impacts on average yields become likely from the 2030s with median yield impacts of 0 to -2% per decade projected for the rest of the century , and after 2050 the risk of more severe impacts increases. These impacts will occur in the context of rising crop demand

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Changes in climate are already affecting the sustainability of agricultural systems and disrupting production.

□ Unless the emissions of GHGs are curbed, changes in temperature, precipitation, and other climate variables will undoubtedly affect agriculture around the world

In 2011 the American Society of Agronomy Crop Science Society of America Soil Science Society of America □ made the following [Position statement](https://www.agronomy.org/files/science-policy/asa-cssa-sssa-climate-change-policy-statement.pdf) : <https://www.agronomy.org/files/science-policy/asa-cssa-sssa-climate-change-policy-statement.pdf>

[Position statement](https://www.agronomy.org/files/science-policy/asa-cssa-sssa-climate-change-policy-statement.pdf) of the American Society of Agronomy Crop Science Society of America Soil Science Society of America.

From their report

I. Introduction

A comprehensive body of scientific evidence indicates beyond reasonable doubt that global climate change is now occurring and that its manifestations threaten the stability of societies as well as natural and managed ecosystems. Increases in ambient temperatures and changes in related processes are directly linked to rising anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere.

The potential related impacts of climate

change on the ability of agricultural systems, which include soil and water resources, to

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provide food, feed, fiber, and fuel, and maintenance of ecosystem services (e.g., water supply and habitat for crop landraces, wild relatives, and pollinators) as well as the integrity of the environment, are major concerns.

Changes in climate are already affecting the sustainability of agricultural systems and disrupting production. While climate is the average weather conditions in given locations over multiple decades, weather consists of the hourly and day-to-day variations in temperature, precipitation, and other variables. In many places around the world, increased incidence of extreme events such as heat waves, droughts, and floods have been documented.

Although no singular event can be attributed to climate change, collectively recent extreme weather events have had a significant impact on agricultural production. There have been several major weather events in Iowa, the Northern Great Plains, Europe, Australia, and Ukraine that have affected agriculture, for example:

- The 2008 floods in Iowa which affected nearly 10% of corn and soybean acreage,

causing over \$1 B in losses to crops, livestock, property, and income;

- back-to-back 100-year floods in the Northern Great Plains during 2009

and 2010;

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- extreme heat waves during the summer of 2003 in Europe;
- recent multi-year droughts in Australia that peaked in 2007;
- the 2010 failure of the Ukrainian grain crop;
- and devastating drought in Niger during the summer of 2010.

Agriculture has an important role to play in responding to climate change, both mitigating its causes and adapting to its unavoidable impacts. Agriculture contributes to mitigation through minimizing GHG emissions, sequestering atmospheric carbon... The overall aim of the response to climate change is to ensure food security and other essential human enterprises, while protecting ecosystems

and their vital services.

Since the above report of 2011, the impacts of Climate change have exacerbated

To address the probable outcomes of climate change, the BC government must place more not less land in the Agricultural Land reserve. The future possibility of increase droughts and floods could impact not only on our local food supply but also on the source of imported food. For this reason there is an ethical imperative to ensure a strong extensive land base for Agriculture and to not facilitate the increased dependence on fossil fuel.

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In addition, land that may be perceived now, to be presently unusable for agriculture, could become usable in the future. We are living in the wake of years of corporate/government collusion leading to the destruction of ecosystems and arable land. We are also living in a state of uncertainty and we should proceed with caution invoking the precautionary principle.

Bill 24 WOULD UNDERMINE THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The Canadian government signed and ratified the UN framework convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

in addition, both these conventions were endorsed at the BC cabinet level in 1992. (document received through Freedom of Information). Thus BC is bound by the two conventions); thus BC is bound by these conventions.

This precautionary principle is contained In the Convention on Biological Biodiversity, and reads as the following:

where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat

Undoubtedly by removing sections from the ALR will contribute to a loss of biodiversity.

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Under Principle 3, of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Changes is the following enunciation of the precautionary principle;

The Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing

such measures,...

Hopefully the BC Government will not agree to fossil fuel projects which will exacerbate climate change and be a threat to food security.

BILL 24 WOULD THREATEN THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Since at least 1972, there has been an internationally established norm related to the rights of future generations;

Under the article 4 of the 1972 legally binding UN Convention on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage is the following commitment to future generations:

There is the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, preservation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage

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Under the definition of "Sustainable use" is a link to future generations

"Sustainable use" means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

And under the preamble of the Convention on biological Diversity is expressed the following affirmation;

Determined to conserve and sustainably use biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations

In the Preamble of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, is expressed an obligation to present and future generations:

Recalling the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and resolutions 43/53 of 6 December 1988, 44/207 of 22 December 1989, 45/212 of 21 December 1990 and 46/169 of 19 December 1991 on protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Determined to protect the climate system for present and future generations

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And in Article 3, the following principle is enunciated;

Article 3

PRINCIPLES

In their actions to achieve the objective of the Convention and to implement its provisions, the Parties shall be guided, inter alia, by the following:

1. The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country

Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.

IN CONCLUSION

With the proposal to reduce the ALR, BC government`s own commitments seem to be ignored and the bill is out of sync with the important considerations, principles and directions of the global community. With bill 24 the BC government will be negligent in its defying of the precautionary principle and in its moving towards food insecurity and towards lack of food sovereignty. BILL 24 has also been conceived with little regard for the rights on future generations.

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