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Minister's Advisory Committee  
Environmental Assessment Revitalization  
c/o Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
Victoria, BC

Cowichan Green Community (CGC) is a non-profit organization that has been focusing on environmental sustainability in the Cowichan region of Vancouver Island for more than eleven years. CGC's mission is "to cultivate food, community and resilience", with a focus on food security and food sovereignty. We believe in peoples' right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. We support this through education, developing strong relationships with local food producers and promoting urban and rural food production.

As advocates for regional and sustainable food systems, we applaud your Ministry's commitment to overhaul BC's environmental review process and strongly support efforts to improve transparency, focus on reconciliation, and move toward protecting the environment as key. CGC is in full support of further strengthening the environmental review process in the manner outlined by West Coast Environmental Law et al. in the two documents "Achieving Sustainability: A vision for Next-Generation Environmental Assessment in British Columbia" and "A Blueprint for revitalizing Environmental Assessment in British Columbia".

As the climate continues to warm, British Columbia is likely to become an important bread basket of North America. This makes it even more important that the EA process values land for sustainable food production and that legislation offers strong protection of both current and future food production systems, taking into account risks and cumulative negative impacts.

We offer the following recommendations for sustainable project approvals:

- \* Any project which potentially impacts the economic or ecological viability of food systems, or threatens access to local and culturally appropriate food, be designated as reviewable. This will require the establishment of criteria by food security experts to assess potential impact on current and future use of land for food production
- \* No project passes the Readiness Gate if it is on ALR land or any land that is an important migratory or reproductive route (e.g salmon fry, caribou birthing areas, keystone predator movement)
- \* Regional food security experts are consulted in the early engagement phase of every review
- \* A plan for bio-regeneration of the land to its pre-project state must be a fundamental requirement for any project. It is essential that all costs of this ecological regeneration be borne by the proponent so that clean-up is not left to the tax payer.
- \* Key criteria for a project to pass the review include:
  - the minimization of impacts on key wild food species (plant and animal) and total ecology of the area
  - assessment of downstream impacts on water necessary for current and future food production
  - the consideration of the rights of local people to define their own food and agriculture systems

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input,

Nadeane Nelson, President