

PRESS RELEASE

Sproat Lake Residents Frustrated with Draft OCP, Point to Cowichan Valley Repeal

SPROAT LAKE, BC – July 28, 2026 — Hundreds of Sproat Lake area residents are calling on the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) to significantly reduce the scope of the proposed Area D Official Community Plan following strong public opposition at a July 7 meeting. The Sproat Lake Property Owners Association (SLPOA) says recent events in the Cowichan Valley Regional District demonstrate the importance of ensuring major planning documents have broad community support before they are finalized.

Approximately 180 residents packed the Sproat Lake Community Hall for a standing-room-only meeting. Dozens of speakers raised concerns about the draft OCP's length, complexity, potential costs, and the consultation process.

"The turnout showed how deeply residents care about the future of Sproat Lake," said a spokesperson for the SLPOA. "The draft OCP has grown far beyond what many believe is necessary and risks creating significant long-term costs for taxpayers without clear community benefit."

Key concerns raised by residents included:

- The overall size and complexity of the document
- Development Permit Areas with expensive and unnecessary permitting requirements and costs
- The potential for increased staffing, consultant fees, and property taxes
- Opposition to regulating matters already handled by provincial and federal agencies, including docks and water quality
- Preference for public lake access to be managed through proper provincial parks rather than small, unmanaged access points

On July 10, SLPOA board members met with ACRD staff to restate these concerns and recommend that the OCP be limited to matters required under provincial legislation.

Residents also questioned the ACRD's reference to a "silent minority." The SLPOA asks how unidentified views can outweigh the extensive feedback received through public meetings, written submissions, and direct community participation.

"If the views of people who did not participate can outweigh those who did, residents are left wondering what role public consultation actually plays," the Association said.

The Association is calling on the ACRD to simplify the draft OCP by limiting it to policies required under provincial legislation, remove Development Permit Areas, and continue collaborative discussions with residents and First Nations before adopting a final plan.

“The community and local First Nations have consistently shown they value clean water, responsible stewardship, and respectful development,” the Association said. “The question is not whether these goals matter, but whether expanding the Official Community Plan is the most effective and affordable way to achieve them.”

The SLPOA points to the Cowichan Valley Regional District as a recent example of why broad community support is essential. After significant public concern, the CVRD paused major planning initiatives and has begun repealing a recently adopted electoral area OCP.

About the SLPOA

The Sproat Lake Property Owners Association is a volunteer organization representing property owners and residents of Sproat Lake Area D in the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District on Vancouver Island. The Association works to promote responsible stewardship, informed public participation, and effective local governance on issues affecting Sproat Lake Area D.