

From: [Rebecca Messinger](#)
To: [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jose Alvarez](#); [Sonja Wiser](#)
Subject: FW: Agriculture building exemption removal was a mistake and needs to be repealed.
Date: Monday, March 25, 2024 8:45:34 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Please see the below public comments. Thank you.



Rebecca Messinger
Clerk to the Council
COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

564-397-4305



From: Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2024 3:07 PM
To: Rebecca Messinger <Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: FW: Agriculture building exemption removal was a mistake and needs to be repealed.



Kathleen Otto
County Manager

564.397.2458



From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <ccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2024 9:46 PM
To: Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>

Subject: Agriculture building exemption removal was a mistake and needs to be repealed.

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of Clark County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Clark County Council
22, 2024
P.O. Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

March

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Re: Agriculture building exemption removal was a mistake and needs to be repealed.

Dear Councilors,

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. is aware that the Clark County Council removed the agriculture building exemption from the code at a "docket item" hearing. CCCU does not believe the public had enough time to weigh in on this weighty decision. The only reference that was made by county staff, over the need to make that change, was that it would comply with a recommendation from a state agency. Did the councilors research this topic carefully, before making that decision, or did they just do what staff said to do?

The councilors just pounded another nail in the coffin of agriculture in Clark County, with that policy decision. While the councilors claim they want to preserve agriculture in the county, their actions show otherwise. A closer look at the benefits of such exemptions needed to be made. While the councilors may be aware of old farm buildings that were built many years ago, and believe them to be unsafe, they appear to have ignored what is the norm in the construction of the agriculture buildings of today.

The current trend for new agriculture buildings is the use of engineered pole type buildings that are designed similar to the building standards of today's homes. Licensed manufacturers sell and build such buildings. Just as the county recognizes manufactured and mobile homes, the same should be true for manufactured agriculture buildings. There is no need for these buildings to go through a full development review, which the county will now burden the landowner with, whenever a development permit for an ag building is submitted. One permit, sets into motion, all permits. This is not only unnecessary but also very costly. So costly, that it means the life or death of the agriculture endeavor.

The decision to remove the exemption should be repealed. In its place, there could be language that describes what is acceptable and not acceptable. All existing

agriculture buildings were vested in the laws in place when they were constructed, and therefore must be exempt. Future agriculture buildings should show that they come from engineered plans, whether they are from a licensed manufacturer, or from a private licensed engineer. Those credentials should be sufficient to allow for the construction of an agriculture building. It should be a simple and quick process, as many farmers must buy expensive equipment, before they can begin their agriculture endeavor. That means they must have a safe and secure building to store them, before they can do anything else. Keep in mind,, farmers and foresters are always "up against the weather". Certain things must be done at certain times. Without this first step, a farmer cannot go to the next step of actual farming, whether it be agriculture or forestry.

It is unfortunate that such a weighty decision was made so quickly at a docket hearing, whereby the public was at a disadvantage to knowing what decisions were going to be made. There are so many county website pages, that is is very difficult for a layman to navigate the information. Had this information for the potential of the exemption removal, been forthright and very open to the public, the council would have had many comments in protest to such actions. But would that have mattered?

CCCU is asking the councilors to repeal the decision for a blanket removal of agriculture building exemptions and replace it with a fair, transparent and equitable solution to a problem that must be defined, and justifies the need for future regulations. Agriculture buildings that have been engineered by certified engineers, should continue to be exempt.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

Clark County Citizens United, Inc.
P.O. Box 2188
Battle Ground, Washington 98604

RCW [19.27.015](#)

Definitions.

*** CHANGE IN 2024 *** (SEE [5508.SL](#)) ***

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Agricultural structure" means a structure designed and constructed to house farm implements, hay, grain, poultry, livestock, or other horticultural products. This structure may not be a place of human habitation or a place of employment where agricultural products are processed, treated, or packaged, nor may it be a place

used by the public.

[RCWs](#) > [Title 19](#) > [Chapter 19.27](#) > [Section 19.27.060](#)

[19.27.050](#) << [19.27.060](#) >> [19.27.065](#)

[PDF](#) [RCW 19.27.060](#)

Local building regulations superseded—Exceptions.

(4) The governing body of each county or city may limit the application of any portion of the state building code to exclude specified classes or types of buildings or structures according to use other than single-family or multifamily residential buildings. However, in no event shall fruits or vegetables of the tree or vine stored in buildings or warehouses constitute combustible stock for the purposes of application of the uniform fire code. A governing body of a county or city may inspect facilities used for temporary storage and processing of agricultural commodities.

RCW [19.27.065](#)

Exemption—Temporary growing structures used for commercial production of horticultural plants.

*** CHANGE IN 2024 *** (SEE [5508.SL](#)) ***

The provisions of this chapter do not apply to temporary growing structures used solely for the commercial production of horticultural plants including ornamental plants, flowers, vegetables, and fruits. A temporary growing structure is not considered a building for purposes of this chapter.

Clark County Citizens United, Inc. P.O. Box 2188 Battle Ground, Washington 98604
E-Mail cccuinc@yahoo.com