

Introduction

Welcome to the ALR and ALC Revitalization 2018 Online Survey

The Minister of Agriculture, Lana Popham, was tasked in her mandate letter with “Revitalizing the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)”. To deliver on this important commitment, the Minister established an independent advisory committee (Advisory Committee) to provide recommendations to government through consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the public, including through an online survey.

In examining measures to revitalize the ALC and ALR, stakeholders and the public will be asked to consider the purpose of the ALC as set out in Section 6 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act (the Act):

- (a) to preserve agricultural land;
- (b) to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and,
- (c) to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

Discussion Paper:

To better answer the questions in the survey and provide input, the Advisory Committee requests that you read this Discussion Paper: [Discussion Paper](#)

Survey Length:

Note: It is anticipated that the online survey should take no more than 10-30 minutes to complete, depending on the content you provide.

For more detailed submissions to the Advisory Committee, please send them by email or mail:

Email: ALR_ALCRevitalization@gov.bc.ca

Mail: Minister's Advisory Committee
Revitalization of ALR and ALC
C/o Ministry of Agriculture
PO Box 9120
Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria BC V8W 9B4

Privacy Policy

Your comments and feedback are collected by the Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of the Minister's Advisory Committee under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FOIPPA"), for the purpose of soliciting the public's feedback on Revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission. To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include any personal information including phone numbers and email addresses in the body of your comments. Please do not share personal information about others. Should you have any questions about the collection of this information please contact: Martha Anslow, Director of Policy, Martha.Anslow@gov.bc.ca 250-387-3232.

Questions

What group(s) do you identify with?

- ☐ Farmer or Rancher
- ☐ Agricultural Processor
- ☐ Agriculture industry group
- ☐ Agricultural interest group
- ☐ Farm land preservation group
- ☐ Agriculture sector specialist (e.g. Agrologist)
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ First Nation government
- ☐ Elected official
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your age group?

- ☐ 0-29 years old
- ☐ 30-49 years old
- ☐ 50-64 years old
- ☐ 65 years and over
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Do you own land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)?

- ☐ Yes, less than 2 hectares in size (approximately 5 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 2 hectares and 8 hectares in size (approximately 5 and 20 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 8 hectares and 16 hectares in size (approximately 20 and 40 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 16 hectares and 40 hectares in size (approximately 40 and 100 acres)
- ☐ Yes, greater than 40 hectares in size (approximately 100 acres)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Do you lease or rent land in the ALR?

- ☐ Yes, less than 2 hectares in size (approximately 5 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 2 hectares and 8 hectares in size (approximately 5 and 20 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 8 hectares and 16 hectares in size (approximately 20 and 40 acres)
- ☐ Yes, between 16 hectares and 40 hectares in size (approximately 40 and 100 acres)
- ☐ Yes, greater than 40 hectares in size (approximately 100 acres)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

In what region(s) of the province do you live?



- ☐ Interior
- ☐ Island
- ☐ Kootenay
- ☐ North
- ☐ Okanagan
- ☐ South Coast
- ☐ Non-BC resident
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Would you consider your property to be in a rural, urban, or urban fringe area?

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Urban fringe
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other

If you said "Other", please specify:

A maximum of 300 characters are allowed.

To guide consultation and engagement and support recommendations to the Minister, the Advisory Committee has identified three general ALR and ALC objectives:

1. Preserve the productive capacity of land in the ALR;
2. Encourage farming of land in the ALR for uses related to agriculture and food production; and,
3. Strengthen the administration and governance of the ALR and ALC to both increase public confidence and to ensure that land use regulation and land use decisions are preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming and ranching in the ALR.

The Advisory Committee has also identified 10 common revitalization themes. For each of the themes below, please provide your views and comments.

1. Theme 1: A defensible and defended ALR
2. Theme 2: ALR resilience
3. Theme 3: Stable governance
4. Theme 4: Efficacy of zone 1 and zone 2
5. Theme 5: Interpretation and implementation of the Act and regulation
6. Theme 6: Food security and B.C.'s agricultural contribution
7. Theme 7: Residential uses in the ALR
8. Theme 8: Farm processing and sales in the ALR
9. Theme 9: Unauthorized uses
10. Theme 10: Non-Farm uses and resource extraction in the ALR

Theme 1: A Defensible and Defended ALR

During the past 45 years, the ALR boundary has been refined through early boundary reviews, local government land use planning exercises and over 48,000 individual applications. The ALR boundary is often viewed as temporary and adjustable. The perspective that the ALR is available for urban uses perpetuates land use pressure on farmland. Continued speculation of this nature results in a focus on applications made by individual landowners to modify the ALR and detracts from pro-active work such as focussing on regional-level land use planning, analysis of permitted uses and the preservation and encouraging farm use mandate.

Do you have any comments about ensuring a defensible and defended ALR into the future?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 2: ALR Resilience

Pressure for non-agricultural uses persists on the ALR land base and on the administrative body (the ALC) that oversees it. The ALR, ALC, and agriculture in BC should be stable and resilient for generations to come.

What do you see as the top three challenges to ALR and ALC resilience into the future?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 3: Stable Governance

The ALC governance and decision making model can be easily changed through legislative amendments and changing government direction. The ALC's independence is often threatened from interests outside of the ALC. Independence is vital to strengthening the ALC and ALR into the future. More information about ALC governance can be found on the [ALC Operations & Governance webpage](#).

Do you have any comments on ensuring stable ALC governance into the future?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 4: Efficacy of Zones 1 and 2

The passage of Bill 24 in May 2014 introduced amendments to the Act that included the division of the ALR into Zone 1 and Zone 2.

Zone 1: Includes Vancouver Island, South Coast, and Okanagan Panel regions.

Zone 2: Includes Interior, Kootenay, and North Panel regions.

In Zone 1, land use decisions are based on the agricultural purposes of the ALC laid out in section 6 of the ALC Act. The Act considers preservation of agricultural land, encouraging farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and encourages local governments, First Nations, and other agencies to enable farm use and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

In Zone 2, the Commission is required to consider the agricultural purposes of the Commission (Section 6 of the Act as identified above), as well as Section 4.3 of the Act pertaining to economic, cultural and social values, and regional and community planning objections.

More information about Bill 24 amendments can be found on the [ALC Act and ALR Regulation webpage](#). For example, the Regulation was amended to include additional uses that allow a residential lease for a retiring farmer to remain on their property subject to conditions, and to allow a second single family dwelling if the property is at least 50 hectares and subject to conditions of siting of structures.

What are your thoughts on the current two-zone approach?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 5: Interpretation and Implementation of the Act and Regulation

As drafted, parts of the Act and Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation (the Regulation) are 'permissive', which means that it lists the activities that are permitted in the ALR without requiring approval of the ALC; it does not list what activities are not permitted. In some instances, definitions, criteria, thresholds, and intent of the Act and Regulation are interpreted differently by local governments, ALR land owners, farmers and ranchers and the general public across the province. There is a need for clearer regulations and consistency in interpretation. The ALC is not aware when a permitted activity takes place or when a permitted activity is misinterpreted.

Do you have comments or suggestions for improving clarity and consistency?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 6: Food Security and B.C.'s Agricultural Contribution

Concern over the source and quality of food we eat has raised public attention to the issue of food security and to the long-term ability of the ALR to provide a safe and adequate agricultural land base to accommodate continuous, secure food production for domestic consumption and export. Often agriculture's vital role in the B.C. economy and the potential for export and trade opportunities is forgotten in the discussion around competing land uses. More information on B.C.'s Agriculture and Seafood Sector contributions can be found on the Ministry of Agriculture's Agriculture and Seafood Statistics webpage.

What is your level of agreement with the following statements?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
How important is the province's ability to produce and provide food to the residents of BC?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How important is the province's ability to produce and provide food for export?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have any additional comments about food security and B.C.'s agricultural contribution?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 7: Residential Uses in the ALR

Additional dwellings, farm worker housing, “mega homes” and ‘lifestyle estates’ in the ALR occupy agricultural land. In some circumstances additional dwellings are necessary for intensive agricultural operations; however there is also demand on the ALR for additional dwellings solely for residential purposes. When there is a subdivision of ALR land, it is usually for development of another parcel and residence. In addition, the large footprint occupied by “mega homes” and acreages purchased for lifestyle estates (with little or no agricultural production) has raised concerns about use of arable land for housing and increased residential assessment values of ALR land. While not currently legislated provincially, some local governments have adopted restrictions on sizing and siting of residential uses in the ALR.

Should residential uses in the ALR (such as number, size and siting) be regulated?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Not sure

Comments

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Who should regulate residential land uses in the ALR?

- ☐ Local governments
- ☐ Provincial government
- ☐ The ALC
- ☐ All the above
- ☐ Not sure

Do you have any additional comments about residential uses in the ALR?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 8: Farm Processing and Sales in the ALR

The Regulation permits landowners in the ALR to process and retail farm products on a parcel of land subject to criteria that attempts to ensure that the product is associated with the farm or a registered co-operative. The Regulation affords farmers and ranchers the ability to produce “value added” products (e.g. berry processing, alcohol production, farm stands). Processing and retail facilities range in size and sometimes incorporate other ancillary uses such as parking lots, food services, patios, galleries, event spaces, meeting rooms, etc.; however, there is concern that some facilities are occupying large areas of arable ALR land with little connection to agricultural production on the farm. There is also concern that ALR land is purchased for the other ancillary permitted uses, but there is no agricultural production (i.e. building a retail store with extremely limited farm products for sale).

Should ancillary uses on the parcel be tied to agricultural production?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Not sure

Do you have any additional comments about farm processing and sales in the ALR?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 9: Unauthorized Uses

Agricultural land is sometimes used for unauthorized non-agricultural uses and some landowners expand beyond what is permitted. ALC Compliance and Enforcement officers currently handle between 300 to 400 files annually related to complaints, investigations, or actions on unauthorized uses. Some of these unauthorized uses include illegal filling (e.g. dumping soil, construction waste, concrete), commercial uses (e.g. commercial truck parking, recreational vehicle storage, scrap vehicle yards), and residential uses (e.g. additional dwellings). These activities may directly damage the agricultural land base and in some cases the damage is permanent.

What do you think would decrease the instances of unauthorized use in the ALR? (can choose multiple)

- ☐ Awareness and education
- ☐ Fines and penalties
- ☐ More enforcement
- ☐ Ticketing
- ☐ Other sanctions
- ☐ None of the above

Do you have any additional comments on unauthorized uses in the ALR?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

Theme 10: Non-Farm Uses and Resource Extraction in the ALR

Other activities, from agri-tourism and agri-tourism accommodation to resource extraction such as oil and gas and aggregate (sand and gravel) can take place in the ALR. Concerns about cumulative impacts of these activities and remediation of agricultural land have been raised.

Do you have any comments about non-farm uses and/or resource extraction in the ALR?

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.

After considering each theme, please select what you think are the top three (3) most important themes to be addressed:

- ☐ Theme 1: Defensible and Defended ALR
- ☐ Theme 2: ALR Resilience
- ☐ Theme 3: Stable Governance
- ☐ Theme 4: Efficacy of Zone 1 and Zone 2
- ☐ Theme 5: Interpretation and Implementation of the Act and Regulation
- ☐ Theme 6: Food Security and B.C.'s Agricultural Contribution
- ☐ Theme 7: Residential Uses in the ALR
- ☐ Theme 8: Farm Processing and Sales in the ALR
- ☐ Theme 9: Unauthorized Uses
- ☐ Theme 10: Non-Farm Uses and Resource Extraction in the ALR
- ☐ Other

If you said "Other", please specify

A maximum of 600 characters are allowed.