

ISSUES BINDER SUMMER 2020

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General Highlights

- The Ministry of Agriculture’s budget is more than \$95.4 million for 2020/21, almost \$14 million (\$13.9 million) dollars larger than it was under the previous government.
- The Ministry of Agriculture signed an MOU with the Government of Yukon to expand local food and beverage production in the North.
- B.C.’s farm cash receipts increased 13.3%, or \$462 million to a record \$3.924 billion in 2019.
- B.C. Farmers’ Net Cash Income (Farm Cash Receipts less Farm Operating Expenses) rose from \$441 million to \$560 mil (27%)
- Increases in supply managed sectors include:
 - Beef up 10% (\$25.2 million increase)
 - Nursery up 9% (\$14.5 million increase)
 - Grapes up 8% (\$5.6 million increase)
 - Field vegetables including mushrooms up 5% (\$17.5 million increase)
 - Grains and oilseeds up 3% (\$2.7 million increase).

- Agriculture, Seafood and food processing sectors hit record revenues of \$15 billion for the first time ever in 2018 and were on track for another record high in 2019 (final 2019 stats being compiled).
- Seafood increased by 10% and food and beverage processing jumped 4% in 2018 compared to 2017.
- More than two thousand new jobs were created, bringing the total number of people working in B.C.'s Agriculture Industry to more than 63-thousand.
- B.C. food products sales hit record-breaking highs in 2018 (the most recent year with finalized data available), including \$4.5 billion in international exports and more than \$6 billion worth being bought right here at home.
- We're helping farmers farm so they can continue creating good jobs in B.C. and growing the high-quality local food we depend on.
- We're helping farmers open up new markets and opportunities for their products
 - We've relaunched Buy B.C. to help farmers market their products and reach more people looking for made-in-B.C. products.
 - We've kicked off a Feed B.C. initiative to increase the amount of B.C. food in our hospitals - that means new opportunities for producers, and better hospital food for people.

- B.C. Health Authorities across the province have been inspired to take a new look at how they can offer patients more, fresh B.C. grown and locally-made food and drinks. And we are already seeing amazing results!
- Interior Health was the first to get cracking and now purchases 600,000 shelled eggs a year from B.C. farmers.
- Health authorities like: Northern Health are continually working to include more B.C. food and products on their menu.
- A recent switch to a few from-scratch products made in Interior Health's centralized commissary, rather than brought in from outside of B.C., is contributing greatly to this effort.
- In addition to the collaboration with Interior Health, Northern Health is also proud to be purchasing eggs, chicken thighs, chicken drumsticks and many made-in-B.C. desserts from local suppliers.
- Feed BC has expanded to include Fraser Health, who serves nearly 5 million meals in hospitals and care facilities.
- More than 200 B.C. food and agriculture businesses have already participated in business development training offered through

Feed BC, building their capacity to access public institutions.

- We're connecting diners, chefs and B.C. farmers through our Buy BC: Eat Drink Local campaign, and Every Chef Needs a Farmer event to build demand for local, seasonal food.
- The 2019 Every Chef event was attended by almost 500 of B.C.'s farmers, ranchers, processors, chefs, restaurateurs and food service professionals to network, connect and build relationships.
- We've partnered with Thrifty Foods, the first grocery store chain to prominently feature the Buy BC brand in its stores on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland and encourage customers to buy local products
- We've partnered with Safeway, to make it easier for British Columbians to identify B.C. food and seafood products from around the province through the Buy BC brand.
- We're making changes to help farmers keep farming, now and into the future
 - We're making changes to keep farmland affordable for farmers
 - We're cracking down on dumping illegal fill and construction waste on farmland

- We're giving the Agricultural Land Commission the tools they need to support farmers and ranchers in every corner of B.C.
- We established a new 5-year Canadian Agricultural Partnership with the federal government
 - ...so that our agricultural sector can continue to be an economic driver across B.C.
- We're helping producers and processors reach new markets with the \$5M B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program
 - ...to increase demand for B.C. products and create good jobs for British Columbians.
- We're helping producers affected by wildfires with AgriRecovery (\$20M in 2017; \$5M in 2018)
 - ...so that farmers and ranchers can recover and return to their land and livelihoods.
- We're building a resilient agricultural sector with the \$6M Climate Change Adaptation Program
 - ...so that producers can grow and raise the products we count on now, and into the future.
- We're fueling innovation through the \$14M Agri-Innovation Program
 - ...so that farmers and processors can develop cutting edge new products and processes.

- Provided \$40,000 to B.C. Fairs to support organizers and members attending the B.C. Fairs conference that celebrates more than 50 fairs and exhibitions as well as the people and volunteers behind them

ALR Engagement Sessions

- Created opportunities for farmers and ranchers to provide feedback on protecting farmland in B.C. both in person and online
- Since there have been recent changes by government to strengthen the ALR and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), the ministry, along with the ALC, hosted in-person sessions throughout B.C. to discuss the purpose and context of these changes
- British Columbians were encouraged to share their insights and opinions on how to best address the following challenges:
 - supporting farmers and ranchers in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to expand and diversify their businesses;
 - helping new or young farmers become established on the land and in business; and
 - ensuring there is flexibility for residential options while prioritizing agriculture in the ALR.

- Eight engagement sessions were held in communities all over B.C.: Castlegar, Cranbrook, hub
- Dawson Creek, Delta, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George and Vancouver Island.
- An engagement summary report is being prepared and will be made public once complete.
- Released a new policy intentions paper on January 27, 2020 through work with UBCM, ALC and BCAC that responded to feedback heard through the ALC engagement sessions.
- While policy directions are being finalized, the Ministry extended the grandfathering period for manufactured homes to December 31, 2020.

Animal Welfare

- Supported high-quality care for animals in B.C.'s shelters, BC SPCA facilities, and zoos (including over \$1.4 million to SPCA and over \$2 million to Vancouver Aquarium) during the COVID-19 response, with funding available to help organizations cover the costs of food and medicine for their animals.
- Funding will be available for animal hygiene, habitat upkeep, veterinarian care, limited transportation and repairs to equipment required to ensure the welfare of the animals in care.
- B.C. animal refuges and rehabilitation centres that lack the revenue to ensure animals in their care will

not be in distress will also qualify for funding. This will allow their animals to have a stable food supply and any medication they need.

- Last year, with industry support, we turned the National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice into law in B.C.
- This demonstrates to the public that the B.C. government and the industry respect animal welfare
- In October 2019, we held a roundtable to bring agriculture industry leaders together with the RCMP, police, and the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General
- A key objective was to help those who enforce the laws better understand how serious the impacts of protests can be on livestock producers
- We introduced a motion to amend the Trespass Act so it is clear that it can be used on those who trespass on all livestock premises
- Worked with livestock associations to implement National Farm Animal Care Council's codes of practice (2019)
- Continue to work on developing a dog and cat breeder registry

Aquaculture & Seafood Sector

- \$225,000 from Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP) to support a greener fisheries and aquaculture industry (2018).
- \$10,000 per year to support Young Fisherman's Gathering (2018 & 2019) in Steveston and Victoria.
- Broughton recommendations endorsed by Province and 'Namgis, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis and Mamalilikulla First Nations (2018).
- September 19, 2019, Province came together with representatives from the Namgis, the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis and Mamalilikulla First Nations and with Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West to mark the progress made to protect wild salmon in the Broughton area.
- Achievements made in the last nine months include:
 - The Nations, along with Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West, reached a landmark agreement establishing First Nations oversight of salmon farms operating in their territories during the orderly transition of salmon farms in the area over the next four years.
 - The transition has commenced with the decommissioning of five salmon farms. By the end of 2022, 10 farms will have ceased

operations. The remaining seven farms will continue to operate under the agreement until 2023, when they will also cease operations if no agreement has been reached between the Nations and the salmon farming industry, or if there are not valid Fisheries and Oceans Canada licences in place.

- To help protect, restore and enhance wild salmon in the Broughton area, the provincial government has provided new funding for three First Nations projects that will:
 - assess, prioritize and restore critical salmon habitat in rivers and creeks in the region;
 - assess the feasibility for a genomics lab to support independent First Nations fish health testing; and
 - implement the Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan of Salmon Farms in the Broughton area, which will provide capacity for First Nations monitoring and oversight.
- New policy announced around Land Act Tenures and salmon farming (2018)
- \$1.3M in support for BC Oyster Recovery Fund, to assist with re-seeding efforts & support research survey on marine norovirus travel patterns (2018)

BeeBC/Pollinators

- \$450,000 in support for honey bees and producers for community-based research into bee health (\$150,000 in 2018 & \$100,000 per year 2019, 2020, 2021). 15 projects announced in May, Applications for funding now open!
- \$25,000 as co-sponsor on a study to find solutions to the bee health problems of honeybee colonies involved in pollination (2018)
- \$20,000 in support for B.C. contingent to Apimondia (2019)
- Proclaimed Day of the Honey Bee (2018 -2020)

Berry Sector

- \$1M (over 5 years) for berry plant breeding program, to help blueberry, raspberry and strawberry growers develop new varieties and support the industry's long-term viability (2019).
- B.C.'s top fruit export in 2019 was \$273 million in blueberries.

Business Risk Management

- We're supporting farmers and ranchers through B.C.'s new AgriStability Enhancement Program
 - ...to help producers recover from tough times.

- Farmers enrolled are eligible to receive a much higher interim payment this winter to help them through the difficult 2019 agriculture year
- We Increased the compensation rate by 14% for BC farmers and rancher through the B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program, providing an additional \$9 million over the next two years.

Cattle/Beef Sector

- \$450,000 in support of a B.C. beef packing plant in Prince George to develop an industry-led co-op business model to create jobs (2018)
- Expanded loan guarantee amount for the Cariboo Bred Heifer Cooperative by \$600,000 to support association members in expanding their ranching operations and help ranchers in areas impacted by the 2017 wildfire season to build their herds (2017)
- Ranchers in the Cariboo-Chilcotin are receiving help feeding their livestock through assistance from the B.C. government following forage loss due to flooding in the summer and fall 2019
- The 2019 BC Forage and Transportation Assistance Initiative is providing \$45.50 per ton of hay towards the purchase of additional hay for Cariboo ranchers who must purchase more than they normally would

Climate Action

- \$6M from 2018 to 2023 to help farmers and ranchers prepare and adapt to changing climate and weather conditions
- Regional adaptation strategies have been developed or are underway in eight key agricultural areas of the province: Delta, the Peace, the Cariboo, the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, Kootenay & Boundary, Bulkley-Nechako & Fraser-Fort George, and Vancouver Island
- Over 80 projects funded, addressing climate related risks such as drought, excess moisture, flooding, pests, diseases, and wildfires
- \$300,000 to support projects identified in the Kootenay & Boundary Regional Adaptation Strategies as priority climate actions (2019)
- \$300,000 to support projects identified in the Bulkley-Nechako & Fraser-Fort George Regional Adaptation Strategies (2019)

Chicken/Egg/Poultry Sector

- \$5,200 for Salmonella symposium for producers (Oct. 2017)

- \$28,000 for a Salmonella Intervention Project with Centre for Coastal Health that documented all interventions put in place with industry by 2011 to deal with salmonella and evaluate the impact
- 600,000 shelled eggs procured (as of Aug. 29, 2019) for Interior Health Association because of Feed BC implementation project

Dairy Sector

- Staff support for creation of B.C. Artisan Cheese Association (2019)
- Dairy sector saw an increase in farm cash receipts of \$47 million in 2019 (7.5% increase).

Greenhouse Growers Sector

- Carbon tax relief grants for greenhouse growers, covering 80% of the carbon tax (2018 & 2019)

Indigenous

- Started the B.C. Indigenous Agricultural Development Program in 2018 (joint fed-prov funding) which provides funding to Indigenous governments, communities and organizations for feasibility assessments of food and agriculture development options, food security planning and business planning.

- Expanded the B.C. Indigenous Agricultural Development Program, in 2020, to help Indigenous entrepreneurs with up to \$8,000 in specialized planning and coaching services to develop and plan their food and agricultural businesses.
- In fall 2019, initiated an Indigenous Advisory Group on Agriculture to provide strategic advice, recommend priorities, and offer guidance to the ministry on how to support the success of Indigenous communities and businesses engaged in, or seeking to engage in, land-based agriculture.

Innovation

- Received report by the food security task force that will help our government support food security and support further economic growth.
- Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership's Canada-British Columbia Agri-Innovation Program, over \$5.3 million in funding has been allocated to support innovation project by B.C. farmers, academic institutions and businesses.

Livestock Processing Sector

- Tasked Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food with consultation and report on local meat production and processing industries, focused on growth

- Accepted all recommendations from Committee's report, including shortening distance between Class E's and Class A and B's from 2 hours to 1 hour
- Ensured more locally raised meat will be available for restaurants and retail outlets in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, as well as Electoral Area D of the Regional District of Central Kootenay and Electoral Area H of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George by including them in Class D licensing eligibility.
- \$290,000 in funding to BC Food Processors Association to develop and launch food safety and animal welfare training workshops for rural producers and processors, and Regional Health Authority inspectors (2018/19).
- \$148,000 to support BC Abattoir Association to provide humane slaughter training & improved food safety and sanitation procedures for Class A and B abattoirs.

New/Future Farmers

- Enhanced guides on starting and financing farm co-operatives in B.C. will help farmers build their businesses by providing information on how to pool resources and market their products collectively.
- The recently updated Agricultural Co-operatives Start-Up Guide outlines an easy five-step process to

help farmers create a new local co-op, while the Financing Agricultural Co-operatives Guide provides funding options for co-op farms. Supports specific to agricultural co-operatives are unique, and the updated guides will help farmers throughout B.C. work together to build their businesses and develop new markets.

- \$50,000 for the Field to Fork Challenge, a new BC4-H competition for BC 4-H members to create and submit videos of themselves preparing a recipe highlighting a B.C. ingredient.
- \$25,000 to help grow the Ag in the Classroom's Take a Bite out of B.C. program (2020).
- \$50,000 additional support for 4H British Columbia (2020).
- Including the above, \$205,000 committed to 4H British Columbia for the 2019/2020 fiscal year.
- \$87,000 for continued support for 4H British Columbia (2017).
- \$300,000 in increased support for 4H British Columbia aimed at increasing participation of urban and indigenous youth (2018 & 2019).
- \$300,000 for B.C. Land Matching Program (2018).
- \$375,000 for B.C. Land Matching Program (2019).
- As of July 6, 2020, the B.C. Land Matching Program has helped 70 farming families.

- Land matcher support and services have been implemented in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, Cowichan Valley and Vancouver Island, Okanagan Central North, Columbia Basin and Central/North.
- As of July 6, 2020, 1883 hectares (4653 acres) of B.C. farmland brought into production as a result of the program, many in areas of the province with very expensive real estate.

Organic Sector

- Mandatory certification required for the use of the word 'organic' (2018)
- Supported Certified Organic Association of B.C.'s Organic Online System and Core Review.

Seed Sector

- B.C. provided \$670,000 through the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund to Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Funding has helped support the purchase of Seed testing equipment for the newly renovated seed lab, as well as farm infrastructure for the University's research farm

Traceability Program:

- A \$313,500 uplift to traceability programs in B.C.
- went to 20 B.C. farmers and food processors to upgrade equipment that tracks animal and product movement when products arrive and depart farms, or transit to processing and distribution centres in Feb 2020
- Traceability Programs are supported by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, total funding in B.C. since Jan. 2018 is \$1.75 million
- The programs help ranchers and farmers respond to emergencies, and support food safety in B.C.

Tree fruit & Nut Sector

- \$5M Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund supports planting of new in-demand varieties, updating equipment and expanding their marketing and research efforts over 5 years (2018).
- Production insurance has paid approximately \$21 million to insured tree fruit growers in total claims for damage to fruit and fruit trees (2017 - \$600K, 2018 - \$4.1M, 2019 - \$16.4M)
- \$300,000 over 3 years (2018/19-2020/21) for hazelnut growers to replant with more resilient trees to rebuild and expand their operations (2018)
- In the first two years of the Hazelnut Renewal program, 18,444 new trees were planted over 34

hectares (94 acres). At the same time, 4,795 infected trees were removed over 17 hectares (42 acres).

- The B.C. hazelnut industry is comprised of approximately 40 growers with about 141 hectares (350 acres).

Value-added Processing Sector

- \$250,000 for demonstration regional food hub at Commissary Connect kitchen in Vancouver (Laurel St) (2019).
- \$500,000 to the city of Quesnel to develop a regional food hub (2019).
- \$451,375 for business plans or feasibility studies for potential regional food hubs in Quesnel, Salmon Arm, Deep Bay/Nanaimo, Columbia Basin, Kamloops, Victoria, Hazelton, Courtenay and North Vancouver (2019).
- \$50,000 fed/prov study of hub Summerland (2018).
- \$112,000 to 14 B.C. businesses participating in B.C. Lean for Food Processors Program (2019).
- \$2.58 million, over three years, to create an endowment fund to provide long-term financial support for the B.C. food and beverage innovation professorship at UBC to:

- improve B.C.'s food processors' access to modern processing technology and practices;
 - provide expertise to help the sector continue to innovate and develop new products;
 - help create new potential post-secondary programs in B.C. to develop qualified personnel who will help grow the industry locally;
 - lead development of the B.C. food and beverage innovation centre at UBC Vancouver; and
 - facilitate improved research and information sharing for processors accessing the B.C. Food Hub Network.
- Up to \$1.5 million for two new regional food hub facilities in Port Alberni and Surrey that will grow food processing businesses, create jobs and strengthen local economies.
 - Red tape was removed to allow small-batch dairy products, such as “house-made” yogurt and ice cream, to be made and served in more restaurants.

Wild Salmon Conservation

- \$75,000 to support study of Pacific salmon stock abundance in Gulf of Alaska (2019)
- \$142.85M (\$42M from B.C.) over 5 years for the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) to

restore fish habitat and protect vulnerable wild Pacific salmon (2019)

- \$4.2M to five new Vancouver-based projects under the BCSRIF
- \$2.2M to four Vancouver Island-based projects under the BCSRIF
- \$5M to Pacific Salmon Foundation to support their work (2019)
- Proclaimed B.C. Wild Salmon Day (2019)
- Broughton recommendations endorsed by Province and 'Namgis, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis and Mamalilikulla First Nations (2018)
- New policy announced around Land Act Tenures and salmon farming (2018)

Wine/Brewing/Cider Sector

- Changed the regulations to allow all alcohol producers in the ALR to operate under the same rules, levelling the playing field for B.C. brewers, mead makers and distillers (2017).
- Declared April 2018 B.C. Wine Month and contributed \$100,000 to help promote B.C. wine.
- \$100,000 to support a new sustainability certification program for B.C. grape growers to put green standards right on the label (2018).

- Launched four new Geographic Indications in B.C., the Thompson Valley, Shuswap, Lillooet and Kootenays (2018), to help people identify wines in the marketplace and provide assurance to the origin and quality of the wine.
- Launched new sub-appellations to build local brands and connect more people to local wine – starting with Okanagan Falls (2018) and Naramata Bench and Skaha Bench (2019) and Cowichan Valley in 2020.
- \$50,000 to fund export opportunities for the B.C. Wine Institute to Washington, Oregon and California (2018).
- \$30,000 to the BC Wine and Grape Council to develop an industry resource guide. The guide's content will be aimed at supporting new vineyard and winery operators throughout the province and preparing them for success.

COVID Response

- The Ministry has supported B.C. farming, seafood and food processing communities in the response to the COVID 19 pandemic by:

Securing labour:

- Partnering with foreign governments and B.C. farmers so temporary foreign workers arrived to work in B.C. quickly and safely.

- The Province is funding hotel, food-service costs, translation services, health screening, and other necessary supports for these workers during the 14-day self-isolation period (Over 3,500 workers as of July 3).
- Established protocols, providing guidelines, and conducting inspections at on-farm accommodations and work sites before workers arrive. To-date, over 450 farms have been inspected with over 560 farm sites receiving workers.
- Working with local governments and growers in the Okanagan to support accommodation for seasonal workers from other parts of Canada, that are safe for them and the community.
- Our New B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector website makes it easier for employers and employees to connect so we can fill vacancies and get more British Columbians working to put fresh and local food on our tables.
- Since launching the job connector on May 28, over 120,000 people have visited the site.
- The highest viewed positions are farm jobs with over 40,000 direct views followed by food processing and seafood jobs.
- The highest viewed regions for job opportunities are in the Okanagan, followed closely by Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.

- Industry is also using the site with more than 3000 views of the industry page and over 200 new postings.

Helping Businesses

- Supported B.C. businesses secure personal protective equipment through joint federal-provincial funding, and through a partnership with BC Food and Beverage.
- Funding so agriculture, seafood, and food processing businesses in British Columbia can access consulting and planning services to help with COVID-19 response and recovery.

E-commerce

- New \$550K Buy BC e-commerce funding so farmers and food and beverage processors can develop and market online sales and ship products to consumers throughout the province.
- Partnered with the BC Association of Farmers Markets to supported over 70 farmers markets launched their online virtual store to serve their communities, in addition to the physical markets.

Food Security

- B.C.'s \$5 billion COVID-19 Action Plan offers direct funding for businesses and services and includes new measures such as the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers, deferred tax payments, a delayed Carbon Tax Increase, reduced school tax rates for businesses, and an enhanced B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit.
- Regular contact with B.C. farming organizations and federal colleagues to plan and respond to disruptions so B.C. farmers and ranchers have access to the goods they need to raise their crops and livestock.
- BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon program is available in approximately 79 different communities around the province and will help over 6,000 households in 2020.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
GCPE ISSUE NOTE**

Date: June 11, 2020

Minister Responsible: Hon. Lana Popham

COVID-19: Temporary Domestic Workers Support

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- We know that temporary workers, both domestic and foreign, are a vital part of our food security and agricultural industry.
- Canadian labourers travelling within Canada (i.e. domestic workers from Quebec), who are not showing COVID-19 symptoms, are not required to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in B.C.
- We recognize that the accommodations (housing, camping etc.) for domestic temporary workers who come to B.C. to support farms has been a long-standing issue in the Okanagan.
- We applaud local and regional governments for the work done to-date on this to support these workers and the communities they work in, specifically, the work that's been done with respect to the Loose Bay campground in Oliver to ensure it's supported and is a safe site for domestic migrant workers.
- The Province is supporting the RDOS with \$60K to help with the costs associated with ensuring PHO guidelines for industrial work camps are met at Loose Bay Campground in terms of hygiene requirements and onsite coordination.
- We are also providing \$112K in funding to the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership to help support two camping accommodation sites for these domestic temporary workers from out-of-province and ensure they meet PHO guidelines.
- We are also exploring how we can partner with local government, regional districts and First Nations communities to support additional accommodations as well as mapping, compliance, enforcement and inspection, public education and health guidance in the region.
- We understand the concerns and will work to support community and worker health and safety, during this season, which we hope will lead to permanent improvements for seasons to come.

- **The Province is also making it mandatory for all seasonal fruit pickers to take a new online course through AgSafe to ensure worker, employer and community health and safety with respect to COVID-19.**
- **To work as a fruit picker or stay in a designated campsite in the Okanagan, workers must complete the course by passing the online quiz and show proof of completion to employers.**
- **Senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture will also be working with farmers and the industry association to ensure farmers as employers understand their responsibilities as employers to promote community and worker health and safety during this time.**
- **In addition, the Provincial Health Officer released an order for Industrial Camps which also applies to all agriculture and aquaculture workers operations that provide accommodation for employees regardless of size. The Order includes several requirements for employers, including:**
 - **develop a COVID-19 infection prevention and control protocol;**
 - **maintain high levels of accommodation, worksite and worker hygiene;**
 - **provide for a rapid response if a worker develops symptoms;**
 - **not permit a worker who has symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. fever, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, or difficulty breathing) to work;**
 - **ensure that a worker with symptoms of COVID-19 is self-isolating and provide the support the worker needs to self-isolate.**
- **All farms in B.C. must follow the same housing and on-farm safety guidelines, whether they have local, out-of-province, out-of-country, or a combination of those workers housed on their farms. All farms must:**
 - **Ensure employees maintain physical distancing of at least two meters while working or at rest on farm, in accommodation, or transport, or use physical barriers such as plexiglass or face coverings if that distancing cannot be maintained.**
 - **Provide employee training in a familiar language explaining safety measures and protocols, physical distancing, hygiene and monitoring and reporting illness.**

ADVICE TO MINISTER

- **Educate employees on measures to prevent infection and transmission in their personal and on-farm actions, including handwashing, and equipment use and disinfection.**
- **In addition, the Province is initiating work with agricultural industry associations to ensure contingency plans are in place should there be a COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be addressed on the farm. These plans would apply to both domestic and foreign workers.**

BACKGROUND:

Every summer, approximately 1,000-1,500 domestic migrant seasonal workers from other parts of Canada (mainly from Quebec) arrive in B.C. to work in agricultural and forestry sector jobs in B.C. Most of this work is on fruit farms in the Okanagan for the cherry harvest season.

Municipal elected officials have expressed concern that COVID-19 outbreaks could be caused by these workers as they tend to live communally in tents and gather in groups in the small town municipal centres. Some workers, when not employed and staying on farms, camp in unsupervised camps located on provincial land. These camps are notorious for debris and lack of sanitary facilities.

To-date, the Province has given \$60k in funding support to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen for continued coordination of the Loose Bay campground near Oliver, a seasonal facility that historically catered to approximately 300 domestic temporary workers each summer.

The Province has also given \$112K to the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership submission dated May 21, 2020 to provide two camping accommodation sites, with the necessary hygiene and safety requirements, dedicated for these workers.

The Province has also worked with AgSafe to develop a new online course that seasonal workers are required to take and show proof of completion before they can work or stay in designated campgrounds. The online course outlines the rights and responsibilities of both employers and workers when it comes to COVID-19 and provincial health officer rules and guidelines. This includes information on physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning, work pods, tools and equipment, safeguarding community and First Nations health and monitoring employee health.

The Ministry is conducting additional work to support the risk mitigation actions in small communities where tree fruit farms and grape growers live and work, and rely on fruit pickers for short term, but critical labour that is needed to harvest their fruit. This work includes the Domestic Agricultural Worker Steering Committee which will to provide advice and guidance to address specific issues such as: identifying additional camp site locations that can be used for fruit picker accommodations to take pressure off of transient camping in communities, working on approval of longer term funding for additional activities that support reducing risk, educational material for fruit pickers and farmers, co-ordinated communications and securing self-isolation locations for fruit pickers should they be needed.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
GCPE ISSUE NOTE**

RECORD OPR: Joint Information Centre

Date: April 16, 2020

Updated: June 22, 2020

Minister Responsible: Hon. Lana Popham

COVID-19: Temporary Foreign Workers Support

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Seasonal labourers are a crucial and appreciated component to our food supply system. We need to help them to work safely in British Columbia.
- That is why the Province has supported the safe arrival of temporary foreign farm workers in B.C. by providing accommodation and meals to allow them to safely self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival to Canada as required by the federal Quarantine Act.
- The Province is funding hotel, food-service costs, translation services, health screening, and other necessary supports for these workers during the 14-day self-isolation period.
- All farms receiving Temporary Foreign Workers are required to have an Infection Control and Prevention Protocol in place prior to worker arrival.
- B.C. has also conducted inspections of the destination farm accommodations to ensure the good work undertaken to prevent transmission of COVID-19 is maintained.
- Of the more than 3,000 TFWs who have arrived since April 13, 2020, 24 have tested positive for COVID-19 with 19 fully recovering so far and now working on farms.
- These TFWs self-isolated in government accommodations while being monitored for symptoms and were only able to travel to farms once cleared by public health officials and deemed asymptomatic.
- This limited the potential for spread of COVID-19 and we consider it a prudent investment.
- Had these workers not been self-isolating in government accommodations, they could have proceeded to separate farms with the potential to transmit to additional other farm workers and caused several different community outbreaks.

- B.C.'s consistent measures around TFWs have allowed us to get much needed labour to our farms and agricultural sector in a safe manner so that we can, in turn, keep the food supply open and get healthy, B.C. products to consumers.
- Through the provincial state of emergency, we have provided this necessary support to make sure TFWs can arrive at farms safely and be ready to work to support our economy and the provincial food supply.
- And through proactive work and partnerships, we have made significant progress, establishing protocols, providing guidelines, and conducting inspections at on-farm accommodations and work sites before workers arrive.
- Managing the enhanced self-isolation period means these skilled foreign workers can arrive and British Columbians can feel secure in knowing that risk mitigation measures are working to control the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.
- This, in turn, supports farms who employ TFWs to make sure they can come to B.C. and arrive at camp healthy and ready to work.
- Once TFWs arrive on farms, they will be able to harvest in the spring and summer and plant for fall crops, supporting food security and the economy in B.C.
- Ultimately it means that farmers can focus on farming and workers can safely work on B.C. farms.

IF ASKED ABOUT TEMPORARY DOMESTIC WORKERS:

- We know that temporary workers, both domestic and foreign, are a vital part of our food security and agricultural industry.
- To protect farmers and farm workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Health Officer has published guidelines for all farms and for all work camps.
- B.C.'s farmers were clear, they needed to secure a skilled workforce and recruit those experienced temporary foreign workers immediately, and we've responded to their priority.
- The requirements outlined in any Provincial Health Officer order are enforceable, including the guidance for farm workers.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

- All farms in B.C. must follow the same housing and on-farm safety guidelines, whether they have local, out-of-province, out-of-country, or a combination of those workers housed on their farms. For example, all farms must:
 - Ensure employees maintain physical distancing of at least two meters while working or at rest on farm, in accommodation, or transport, or use physical barriers such as plexiglass or face coverings if that distancing cannot be maintained.
 - Provide employee training in a familiar language explaining safety measures and protocols, physical distancing, hygiene and monitoring and reporting illness.
 - Educate employees on measures to prevent infection and transmission in their personal and on-farm actions, including handwashing, and equipment use and disinfection.
- In addition, the Province is initiating work with agricultural industry associations to ensure contingency plans are in place should there be a COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be addressed on the farm. These plans would apply to both domestic and foreign workers
- The results that the partnerships with the BC Farming Associations, the federal and foreign governments have achieved demonstrate what can be accomplished in our response to the pandemic.
- The Province continues to work with our partners to support programs and policies that will see more domestic workers involved in sectors like agriculture, from British Columbia and other parts of Canada.

IF ASKED ABOUT ENFORCEMENT:

- The federal government has issued clear guidelines for employers of Temporary Foreign Workers and is the lead agency responsible for enforcing mandatory self-isolation under the Quarantine Act.
- Employees can be fined up to \$750,000 under the federal Quarantine Act if they break their self-isolation or go to worksites before the 14 days are up.

- In B.C., we're providing incoming workers additional support so they can be confident they are meeting self-isolation requirements safely and aren't breaking the law.
- While workers self-isolate, ministry staff are proactively visiting sites to ensure all facilities have the necessary tools to safely accommodate these temporary foreign workers once they come out of self-isolation and arrive to work.
 - As of June 18, 485 inspections have been completed, to make sure farms are safely equipped and organized to manage COVID-19 risks and accept arriving farm workers.
- The police of jurisdiction, which could include RCMP or independent municipal police agencies, enforce mandatory self-isolation for 14 days for anyone arriving in Canada under the Quarantine Act.
- Compliance oversight for Temporary Foreign Workers is facilitated by Employment and Social Development Canada. Individuals who observe a suspected contravention of the expectations of employers are asked to report through ESDC's Online Fraud Reporting tool. Reports will be reviewed by program officers, and who will take action as appropriate.

IF ASKED ABOUT WORKER EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS SUPPORTS:

- Employers are responsible for paying temporary foreign workers for a minimum 30 hours per week during self-isolation, and at the rate of pay specified on the federal Labour Market Impact Assessment.
- This is consistent with the TFW program's genuineness policy, which indicates that reasonable employment needs are a full-time workload (minimum of 30 hours per week).
- Employees who have concerns about their rights can call workplace health and safety offices or the employment standards offices.
 - Call WorkSafeBC about unsafe or dangerous work or workplace safety at 1-888-621-7233.
 - Call the Employment Standards Branch about problems with pay or hours of work at 1-800-663-3316.

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- Employers with questions should contact AgriServiceBC at 1-888-221-7141 or by email at AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca.

BACKGROUND:

Every year, approximately 10,000 seasonal farm workers are employed in B.C. through the federal Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP). As of June 19, 2020, and since the federal 14-day quarantine period, 3,006 TFWs have arrived in British Columbia to perform seasonal farm work, primarily through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). 2,043 of these workers have completed their 14-day self-isolation and are now working on B.C. farms. Prior to these requirements, 1,990 TFWs were already working in B.C. In total, 452 farm sites (some farms have more than one site) currently have TFWs working on them and over 485 farms have been inspected to ensure farms are safely equipped and organized to manage COVID-19 risks and accept arriving farm workers.

The agriculture sector is planning to bring approximately 3,000 more TFWs over the summer. Due to a February frost there is an impact on cherry production which is anticipated to reduce the need for TFWs.

As they TFWs are arriving from outside of Canada, they must follow the self-isolation directive set by the federal Chief Medical Health Officer. TFWs will need to monitor their conditions during self-isolation – if symptoms like a cough, shortness of breath or fever develop, they will need to call the public health authority or 8-1-1.

Upon arrival in Canada, TFWs who have travelled to B.C. for seasonal farming work will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms by federal officials (Canadian Border Service Agency and Public Health Agency of Canada). If they have symptoms upon arrival, depending on the severity of their condition, they may be placed in quarantine at the point of entry or be sent to the hospital as per the federal Quarantine Act. If asymptomatic, workers will be sent to a government-managed accommodation to self-isolate for 14 days.

Following 14 days of self-isolation, if no symptoms develop (or once the employee is fully recovered if symptoms do develop), workers will be safely transported to their farm. If TFWs have questions or concerns about their rights, they will be able to contact workplace health and safety offices or employment standards offices.

On April 13, the federal government announced \$50 million to help temporary foreign workers arriving to work in the farming, fishing and food production and processing industries put in place self-isolation measures. It allows TFWs an exemption to travel restrictions to Canada provided they can adhere to the 14-day self-isolation period upon arrival. This will support worker salaries while they are self-isolating for 14 days or housing upgrades to meet requirements.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

<p>CONFIDENTIAL GCPE ISSUE NOTE</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture Date: June 11, 2020 Minister Responsible: Lana Popham</p>	<p>COVID-19: Food Security and Labour Force</p>
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RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The past few months have been very difficult for everyone, including the approximately 63,000 British Columbians who are involved in putting food on our tables.
- B.C. farmers, ranchers, fishers, harvesters and food processors are resilient by nature, and the B.C. government is there to support them as they adapt their businesses to the new normal.
- COVID-19 has brought into focus for many of us our province's food security. It has shone a bright light on the need for our province to become more self-sufficient, more sustainable, and resilient.
- We continue to work hard by encouraging farming through Grow BC, by moving more grown and processed foods into places like our hospitals to Feed BC and making it easier for consumers to identify products with a Buy BC label so you can feed your family with health, local food while also supporting your community and your local economy.
- The support we are currently seeing for those who put food on our tables is incredible. Thank-you to the many people around the province who are showing their support to those in the agriculture and food industry by buying local products grown and made right here in B.C.

Labour

- **Seasonal labourers are a crucial and appreciated part of our food supply system.**
- **The farm, fish and food sectors generate approximately \$15 billion a year in sales, and it is a big employer. There are over 200 agriculture and 100 seafood commodities with a total labour force of approximately 80,000 workers.**

- **Temporary foreign workers make an important contribution to that workforce and are skilled and trained for specific tasks like orchard pruning and crop preparation.**
- **B.C.'s farmers were clear, they needed to secure a skilled workforce and recruit those experienced temporary foreign workers immediately, and we've responded to their priority.**
- **The results we've achieved so far, safely bringing in temporary foreign workers, demonstrates what can be accomplished by working together with B.C. Farming Associations and the federal and foreign governments.**
- **We've also been working with local governments and growers in the Okanagan to develop measures to support accommodation for seasonal workers who arrive from other parts of Canada, that are safe for them and the community.**
- **And our new B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector website will make it easier for employers and employees to connect so we can fill vacancies and get more British Columbians working to put fresh and local food on our tables.**
- **The site will showcase the diversity of opportunities that exist within agriculture and food for anyone, from students or people looking for seasonal employment, to heavy equipment operators and professionals.**
- **With this uncertainty, it is more important than ever for British Columbians to help be a part of our food security solution and become BC Food Heroes.**

BACKGROUND:

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the agriculture and food sector. From labour shortages to loss of markets/sales to changing distribution and commerce channels, combined with the daily pressures of finding new ways to work and do business it has led to concerns about food security in B.C.

In 2018, B.C. saw a record-high revenue of \$15 billion in the agriculture and food processing sectors and looks to be even higher for 2019 based on the first three-quarters of stats received to-date. These numbers will take a hit in 2020 and possibly beyond due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has virtually eliminated the restaurant market for B.C.'s agricultural products, many of which are grown or processed specifically for that market. The closure of restaurants decimated

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the shellfish industry as 90% of their business is solely dependent on fresh shellfish, a perishable commodity, being sold in restaurants. The shellfish sector is a \$46 million per year industry.

Horticulture (ornamentals and flowers) was significantly impacted at the beginning of COVID-19 because their clients in Canada and the US made a retail decision that the shelves in their stores needed to be stocked with food and other important demand driven products rather than ornamentals and flowers.

The berry sector is concerned they may not have the usual number of fresh berries available in retail or for exporting because COVID-19 has changed the way and amount of harvesting that they normally would do. In addition, blueberry packers are having less people packing blueberries due to the public health orders in place. This has led to more berries being frozen but there is not enough freezer capacity to handle the number of berries required to be frozen.

Labour shortages are also playing a factor in food security issues. Over 10,000 temporary foreign workers (TFWs) are usually employed each year on B.C. farms. In 2019, there were 13,500 TFW applications for B.C. While we have been successful in getting temporary foreign workers from Mexico this year, we're still looking at approximately 2,000 less workers just from there. While we're still seeing domestic workers from other provinces coming to B.C., due to COVID-19 it will likely be a reduced number this year.

Upon arrival in Canada, TFWs who have travelled to B.C. for seasonal farming work will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms by federal officials (Canadian Border Service Agency and Public Health Agency of Canada). If they have symptoms upon arrival, depending on the severity of their condition, they may be placed in quarantine at the point of entry or be sent to the hospital as per the federal Quarantine Act. If asymptomatic, workers will be sent to a government-managed accommodation near the airport to self-isolate for 14 days.

Before the mandatory 14-day self-isolation rules were put in place, B.C. saw 1,990 temporary foreign workers arrive before end of March. Since mid-April, over 2,800 TFWs have arrived and self-isolated in Richmond hotels while being monitored for symptoms and are only able to travel to farms once cleared by public health officials and deemed asymptomatic. So far, 23 have tested positive for COVID-19 with 17 now gone on to work at different farms. Had these workers not been self-isolating in government accommodations, they could have proceeded to separate farms with the potential to transmit to additional other farm workers and caused several different community outbreaks.

On April 13, the federal government announced \$50 million to help temporary foreign workers arriving to work in the farming, fishing and food production and processing industries put in place self-isolation measures. It allows TFWs an exemption to the “travel restrictions” for travel to Canada provided they can adhere to the 14-day self-isolation period upon arrival. This will support worker salaries while they are self-isolating for 14 days or housing upgrades to meet requirements.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: June 12, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Food Security Task Force

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Food security is vital to our economy and the wellbeing of all British Columbians. Our government is working hard to ensure we have a safe and resilient local food system now and for generations to come.
- The Food Security Task Force made four key recommendations and the Ministry of Agriculture is studying how they can fit within our government's core values of promoting farming and protecting farmland.
- The task force believes that for B.C. to lead the next agricultural revolution, the sector must be ready and supported to develop and deploy technologies that will help grow the agriculture sector in the future.
- The report has lots of great ideas that speak to our values and we are already hard at work, putting these actions into place.
- For example, the AgriTech Innovation Challenge, regional food innovation hubs and cost-shared funding through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership align with the recommendations of the task force and will help the agriculture industry continue to thrive in British Columbia.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is also working with the Ministry of Environment's Climate Action Secretariat looking at future actions related to food security and technology as part of the Province's draft Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy.

If asked about recommendation #4:

- With respect to the recommendation #4 on agri-industrial land-use, we have established the Agri-Tech Land-Use Secretariat to engage stakeholders and consider land use opportunities throughout the entire province, rather than in the ALR specifically.

- **The Secretariat will be in close collaboration with the ALC and work to develop policy recommendations that would increase food security and support the Ministry of Agriculture’s ongoing efforts to build a safe, sustainable and resilient food system.**
- **I will review any recommendations on next steps and will only proceed if the proposed changes are consistent with our government’s core values of promoting farming and protecting farmland.**

KEY FACTS:

The Food Security Task Force, in collaboration with stakeholders, worked on a report to help build on the successes of the agricultural sector and provide recommendations to further unlock the potential of agritech in B.C.

They studied how to:

- Apply agri-technologies to enhance sector productivity, economic competitiveness and sustainability, reduce waste and tailor productivity to meet market demands;
- Grow the emerging agritech sector in B.C. as a standalone economic sector that can produce technologies that will be in demand globally; and
- Support the objectives of CleanBC, both through the adoption of technologies and practices that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase access to fresh, healthy food and grow local economies.

The task force made four recommendations:

- applying the United Nation’ Sustainable Development Goals to agricultural policies;
- establishing an incubation/acceleration strategy for B.C.’s agritech sector;
- creating an agriculture and agritech institute in B.C. in partnership with post-secondary institutions; and
- reviewing land use planning policies and regulations to ensure B.C.’s agritech sector has a place to grow.

The task force engaged industry and the public through an online survey, in-person engagement and via webinar. The task force received almost 450 submissions to the online engagement and met with over 100 people as part of their in-person engagements, including representatives from various levels of government, industry associations, business associations, farmers, food processors, agritech companies, post-secondary institutions, non-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations and the Agricultural Land Commission.

The ministry is already acting on the four recommendations.

For Recommendation 1, the ministry is scoping opportunities to increasingly incorporate food system resilience objectives into the ministry’s work. This includes:

- s.13
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For Recommendation 2, the ministry is leveraging existing work across government, and exploring new opportunities to support establishing B.C. as a global agritech leader. For example:

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For Recommendation 3, the ministry is fostering cross-ministry coordination to assess gaps and opportunities related to the role of public sector institutions (PSIs) in advancing B.C.'s agritech cluster. For example, we are:

- s.13

For recommendation 4, on May 20, Wes Shoemaker was named the head of the Agri-tech Land Use Secretariat. The purpose of the Secretariat, as outlined in its mandate, is to engage with stakeholders to develop options for government on land use policies that will increase opportunities for agri-tech sector growth.

The initial areas of focus will include:

- s.13

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With respect to Recommendation #4, the report called for government to ensure there is a place to grow food and support emerging agri-tech industries by examining land use policies and other regulatory considerations. The report recommended allocating up to a maximum of 0.25% of the Province's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for agricultural-industrial use and establishing an agri-industrial zone.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUE NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: June 11, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Additional Homes on ALR

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- When it comes to residential flexibility in the ALR, we've worked closely with local governments and listened carefully to the opinions of farmers and ALR land-owners across the province.
- That feedback helped us develop a new policy intentions paper that we released for public comment on January 27.
- The proposed change would enable landowners to have both a principal residence and a small secondary residence on their property, provided they have approval from their local government.
- Options in the intentions paper for residential flexibility include:
 - garden suites, guest houses or carriage suites;
 - accommodation above an existing building;
 - manufactured homes; and
 - permitting a principal residence to be constructed in addition to a manufactured home that was formerly a principal residence.
- New residential options do not include reconsideration of the maximum size of a principal residence.
- Other, or larger, additional residences that are for farm use are still allowed, with permission from the ALC.
- The changes maintain very strong protections for the ALR and have the support of the Chair of the ALC.
- The ALC will remain the decision-maker for additional residences for farm use in the ALR and any new permitted secondary residences may require registration with the ALC for long-term land-use planning purposes.

- **While we're working on these changes, we've extended the grandfathering period for manufactured homes on the ALR for another year.**
- **The policy intentions paper resulted from collaborative work with the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the ALC and the BC Agriculture Council, and responds to feedback the ministry heard during public consultations.**
- **The policy direction is also guided by the results of the Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on ALR Revitalization.**
- **While the COVID-19 pandemic has put the immediate focus on providing B.C. farmers with emergency support and response, we will continue to move forward in our efforts to revitalizing the ALR.**
- **The ALR is B.C.'s best food producing land and is just 5% of our province's land base – it's so important to a successful provincial food system.**
- **We want British Columbians to be able to enjoy locally grown or processed food now, and for generations to come.**

BACKGROUND:

The ministry held a second public engagement process in late 2019 to hear peoples' thoughts on how to expand farming and protect farmland in B.C. One of the key areas of interest was ensuring there is flexibility for residential options while prioritizing agriculture in the ALR. The ministry is now looking at allowing flexibility for a small second residence, such as mobile homes or carriage houses for all ALR landowners, not just farmers. The Province outlined possible secondary housing options in a policy intentions paper released Jan. 27, 2020. Public feedback was accepted until April 17, 2020 and is now being reviewed.

In November 2018, legislation to revitalize the ALR and ALC, which was based on feedback from a 2018 public engagement, received Royal Assent. The legislation focused on three key changes:

1. Addressing mega-mansions and speculation in the ALR so that farmers can get onto the land and bring it into production.
2. Cracking down on dumping construction waste and fill to protect our valuable, arable soil.
3. Re-instating one zone for all ALR land in B.C. to make it clear that the whole ALR benefits from the same strong protections.

There has been criticism from some ALR landowners and families that they have been left with farm properties that they had intended to build on but missed being grandfathered when Bill 52 came into effect.

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To ensure fairness, people who had all their permits and authorizations in place on Feb. 22, 2019, when the regulations became law, will have construction of their principle residence grandfathered under the old system provided they begin substantial construction by Nov. 5, 2019.

Manufactured Homes

Government heard from a number of ALR landowners concerning the February 22, 2019 regulatory change to the manufactured house allowance under the ALR Use Regulation.

Some manufactured home purchases were underway at the time of the change and were not grandfathered because final permits or foundation construction was not substantially underway by February 22, 2019.

Balancing the protection of the ALR with the needs of ALR families is a key interest of the B.C. Government. A transition period was established that enabled owners to seek local government approvals and permits for a manufactured home on their ALR property provided they had all required permits in place by February 22, 2020. The grandfathering period for manufactured homes has since been extended to December 31, 2020.

For more information please see the following: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AGRI0003-000139>

The legislation was in response to pressures on farmland that had accumulated over previous years which had increased the cost of farmland to be out of reach for many farmers and led to farmland being damaged by other uses.

There were approximately 141,303 land parcels in the ALR in 2019.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

2020 Cherry Harvest

Ministry of Agriculture

Date: June 11, 2020

Minister Responsible: Minister Lana Popham

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- B.C. cherry farmers have had a very tough winter and spring, and this year's harvest will be smaller than usual.
- We know the impact weather can have on growers' crops and incomes, and that's why the government has programs and people in place to help.
- The ministry has an excellent team of dedicated professionals that help B.C. farmers manage their business risks. They were at the orchards this winter and spring, assessing damages, and connecting impacted growers to programs and support.
- For lost or severely damaged crops, ministry staff have and will continue to work with producers to get their crops assessed and claims processed, when it is clear what portion of the crop can no longer be harvested.
- Our government also established the B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program for 2019 and 2020 which provides increased protection for farmers who have lost income due to weather, extreme market-price fluctuations or natural disaster.
 - We are increasing the compensation rate from 70% to 80%, which means that every claim will be increased by 14.3%.
 - Currently, farms with the widest margins receive the least support. We are eliminating the reference margin limit to address this problem.
- Any producers with questions about protecting their incomes in the Okanagan or anywhere else in B.C., should contact the ministry directly. Staff are always willing to help.

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BACKGROUND

- Winter freeze in January and spring frost in April badly affected cherries crop in the Okanagan and Creston area for 2020.
- It is estimated B.C.'s cherry harvest in 2020 will be 50% to 60% of average harvest levels.
- It is anticipated there will be between 250 and 350 cherry yield loss claims for \$12 million and is likely to increase. The Ministry has 420 cherry policies for 2020.
- For comparison, the 2019 cherry crop was also below average crop and resulted in claims of \$3 million and the 2018 harvest was above average with claims of about \$350,000.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture

Date: June 11, 2020

Minister Responsible: Minister Lana Popham

Peace Region – Harvest Challenges

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In fall 2019, excess moisture and snow in the Peace Region resulted in about 30 percent of insured grain and forage acres being left unharvested. Since then, most acres have been harvested, with only about 6% of the 2019 insured acres' crops remaining in the field.
- Ministry staff have been supporting growers, who have reduced or lost crops, and are now working to finalize payments and claims.
- The Ministry expects to provide about \$4.5 million to grain and forage producers in the Peace through Production Insurance.
- The wet spring weather has also delayed seeding in about 20% of the region's grain and oilseed crop acres, mostly in the North Peace.
- Ministry staff are engaged with producers who haven't been able to seed their land, reminding them Production Insurance includes the option of purchasing unseeded acreage coverage, which offers payment in July.
- We have also reminded producers that interim payments are available under AgriStability. In fact, our government and the federal government agreed to increase the 2019 AgriStability interim payment percentage from 50 percent to 75 percent of the estimated final payment.
- Additional income protection has been made available through the recently established B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program which will provide increased protection for farmers who have lost income due to weather, extreme market-price fluctuations or natural disasters.
- B.C. has removed the Reference Margin Limit and increased the compensation rate from 70 percent to 80 percent, which means that every payment in 2019 and 2020 from AgriStability will be increased by a minimum of 14.3 percent.
- The ministry has an excellent team of dedicated professionals that help B.C. farmers manage their business risks. Any producers with questions about protecting their incomes in the Peace or anywhere else in B.C., should contact them directly. They are there to help.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

BACKGROUND

Harvests

- 2019 yields were average to above average and snowed under losses were often offset by the increased production harvested from acres not snowed under; Canola in most areas was 120 percent of normal.
- 31 percent of total grain crop acres in the Peace region were not harvested due to excess field moisture and snow (83,443) unharvested acres out of about 260,000 insured.
- This spring 6% (<16,000 acres) of total 2019 insured acres remain unharvested.
- Most unharvested acres are in the North Peace, and two farms have 1/3 of the acres.
- Overwintering has resulted in quality reductions (e.g. colour, mildew, rot), seed falling to the ground, and wildlife depredation. These losses are covered under Production Insurance (PI).
 - Canola alone accounted for 43 percent of total snowed-under acres and for the most part they were harvested successfully in the spring.
 - Wheat accounted for 24 percent of snowed-under acres. Harvest success was variable with significant acres written off, abandoned or destroyed.
 - Field Peas accounted for 13% of snowed under acres. Most acres in the North Peace were unharvestable and were paid claims in 2019.
- PI provides compensation for the snowed-under losses due to reduced quality and volume. There are 171 farms enrolled, and total claims are currently estimated to be \$4.5M.
- AgriStability will provide income protection as its coverage accounts for both the declines in revenue and the increased costs associated with this type of an event.
- 13 clients are in a potential payment situation for AgriStability with claims estimated at \$942,000.

Seeding

- Prolonged wet weather has delayed seeding of grain and oilseed crops in the Peace.
- For 2020, 80% of all grain and oilseed acres are covered under Production Insurance.
- Up to 80 percent of the approximately 260,000 insured acres have been seeded in the Peace River Regional District.
- Approximately 20 percent of the Peace Region may remain unseeded if current wet conditions prevail.
- Most acres that do get seeded will have a lower yield expectation because later seeding dates shorten the growing period.
- Most of these acres are in the north Peace Region and the harvest is also being delayed by the excess moisture.
- Wet springs and late seeding occur on average once every ten years.
- Unseeded acres coverage is provided as a rider to Production Insurance. This coverage is provided with or without any seeding deadline extension; farmers who are unable to seed crops could receive a payment benefit.
- AgriStability will provide income protection as its coverage accounts for both the declines in revenue and the increased costs associated with this type of an event.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: June 19, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Support for Wild Salmon

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- We've introduced a coast-wide aquaculture policy with rigorous new requirements to protect wild salmon.
- In March 2019, we partnered with the federal government to help restore salmon habitats through the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).
- This \$143 million cost-shared fund targets salmon habitat protection and restoration as well as ensuring the fish and seafood sector in British Columbia is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.
- To date, BCSRIF has supported 41 projects totaling almost \$70M of funding. The projects are very diverse in terms of location, scale and proponent, but all contribute to protecting and restoring wild salmon stocks and creating a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.
- We've also provided \$5M in support to the Pacific Salmon Foundation to help grass roots organizations and their communities protect important species for the next generation of British Columbians.
- B.C. is actively working towards new initiatives to assist salmon recovery, specifically through the development of a made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy.
- The Wild Salmon Advisory Council submitted its final report and recommendations to government in March 2019 as a step within this strategy development process.
- The Council met with residents in several communities, as well as running an online engagement process aimed at gathering ideas from all British Columbians. The engagement took place for several months and

was based on the options paper the council prepared. Next steps for the Wild Salmon Strategy are under development currently.

- Our historic, government-to-government talks with First Nations in the Broughton have produced important recommendations to address Nations' longstanding concerns and protect and restore wild salmon stocks.
- The 13 recommendations will help protect and restore wild salmon stocks, allow an orderly transition of open-pen finfish aquaculture from the Broughton and create a more sustainable future for local communities
- We're working collaboratively to develop a First Nation's guardian and monitoring plan in the Broughton, which includes:
 - Testing fish for diseases, disease agents, pathogens and sea lice before fish are transferred into the ocean and while the fish are in open-net pens
 - Compliance monitoring;
 - Ensuring open and transparent public reporting;
 - Providing trusted information to First Nations community members;
 - Taking steps to avoid and mitigate the impacts of fish farms on wild fish; and,
 - Monitoring and testing of the operator's integrated sea lice management programs
- The B.C. government also supports sustainable management of wild fisheries by:
 - Participating in international negotiations that result in responsible, science-based fishery management and sharing arrangements
 - Delivering diagnostic and research support services that improve the understanding of fish populations and the risks they face
 - Operating the provincial veterinary diagnostic laboratory which supports a comprehensive fish health management program for salmon aquaculture including the federal government's fish health auditing and surveillance program

ADVICE TO MINISTER

BIG BAR (FROM FLNRO)

- The B.C. government is committed to restoring fish passage at the site of the Big Bar landslide and ensuring this important Fraser River resource continues to thrive.
- The federal government, B.C. government and First Nations governments have developed a strong partnership and continue to collaborate on coordinated response efforts. Local First Nations have a hands-on role in remediation efforts.
- Contractors assisting with the remediation efforts have:
 - stabilized the landslide site (including the canyon walls above it)
 - blasted away rock to widen the channel, and cleared some of the rock debris that was blocking the channel to reduce barriers associated with water flows
 - restored an open passage in the river along the west side for migrating fish
 - constructed a “nature-like” fishway to help fish move past the slide site at certain moderate water levels.
 - built a working platform with a concrete-block fish ladder on the west side of the river, for the installation of a pneumatic fish pump to propel fish past the slide site

If asked about costs:

- As of May 27, 2020, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development has spent over \$22.7 million on Big Bar landslide operations, while the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has spent \$44 million.

- s.13; s.16

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KEY FACTS:

Federal and Provincial Roles and Responsibilities

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat and for management of marine fisheries.• Lead for aquaculture management including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Licensing industry consistent with harmonized process with B.C.◦ Proper management and control of aquaculture including management of pollution measures and conservation and protection of wild fish and fish habitat• Aquatic animal health including disease prevention, detection and control; feed, medication, and biologics• Scientific research and monitoring, data collection on industry performance
Ministry of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• B.C.'s lead for seafood industry development• B.C.'s lead for strategic aquaculture and marine fisheries policy• Maintains Plant Animal Health Laboratory that supports DFO's aquaculture audit program
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues tenures authorizing the use of the land, foreshore and marine areas for finfish and shellfish aquaculture (<i>Land Act</i>)• Issues freshwater licences (<i>Water Sustainability Act</i>)• Marine use planning
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues permits for sewage discharge (<i>Environmental Management Act</i>)• Issues permits for pesticide use (<i>Integrated Pest Management Act</i>)

Federal Funding Supports:

In January 2019, DFO announced \$12.6M over four years to Ocean Networks Canada, a national network of ocean observation systems based at the University of Victoria. This investment will strengthen high-quality, real-time data on our marine environment.

In November 2018, Canada announced funding of:

- \$107.4M over five years for stock assessment and rebuilding efforts for priority Pacific salmon stocks, as well as other priority fish stocks across Canada.
- A one-time \$5M contribution to the Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund (as managed by the Pacific Salmon Foundation).

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- \$105M over six years for a new British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. This fund was announced along with a similar new program for Quebec and is based on the success of the Atlantic Fisheries Fund previously announced in 2018.

In October 2018, Canada announced funding of:

- \$164.7M over five years to protect, preserve and recover endangered whales, which includes research on salmon populations.
- \$61.5M over five years to implement a suite of measures to protect and recover the Southern Resident Killer Whale, including funding that will support the conservation of wild pacific salmon.

In May 2017, the Government of Canada announced the \$75M Coastal Restoration Fund to help rehabilitate some of our most vulnerable coastlines and protect marine life and ecosystems.

In November 2016 Canada announced funding of:

- \$1.5B over five years to launch the Oceans Protection Plan.
- \$197.1M over five years of incremental funding for ocean and freshwater science.
- \$284.2M over five years to restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards into the *Fisheries Act*.

Provincial Funding Supports:

In March 2019, the B.C. government announced a \$143M investment to create the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF). The shared funding model allows the federal and provincial governments to cost-share strategic initiatives aimed at preserving and strengthening the fisheries and seafood economies and communities in B.C. To date, BCSRIF has supported 41 projects totaling nearly \$69M of funding to help protect and restore wild salmon stocks, and create a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.

The B.C. government promotes the conservation and enhancement of wild fish populations and freshwater habitat through ongoing investments including:

- Supporting the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C. with approximately \$3M per year raised through provincially issued freshwater fishing licenses. The society stocks about 800 lakes and streams throughout B.C. annually, and conducts research and conservation projects.
- Establishing the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation to invest in projects that maintain and enhance the health and biological diversity of B.C.'s fish, wildlife and habitats. The foundation receives on-going funding through the purchase of provincial hunting and angling licenses and has invested over \$140M in over 2000 projects.
- Establishing policies and systems such as the Riparian Areas Regulation to ensure any development projects near riparian areas undergo a science-based assessment, and the Fisheries Information Summary System be used as a resource to safeguard fisheries in waterbodies throughout B.C.

Other past provincial investments include:

- B.C. Hydro investing \$8.9M between 2015-16 in 124 fish and wildlife conservation projects.

- Establishing the \$21M Living Rivers Trust fund in 2006 to create a legacy for the province based on healthy watersheds, sustainable ecosystems and thriving communities. Since the Trust was started, more than 300 projects have been funded. The B.C. government provided an additional \$1M in core funding in 2012.
- Supporting the Pacific Salmon Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and their natural habitats. B.C. has provided over \$12M to the foundation through the Living Rivers Trust. Provided an additional \$5 million in funding on B.C. Wild Salmon Day (May 16, 2019) to support PSF's conservation programs.
- Providing the B.C. commercial fishing industry with \$100,000 to help them achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of sockeye salmon and other fisheries.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: June 11, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

New Aquaculture Tenure Policy

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In June 2018, we announced a new policy regarding salmon farming tenures along B.C.'s coast.
- That policy makes it clear that, effective June 2022, no new tenures will be approved unless:
 - The fish farm operator has negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate, and;
 - The operator can satisfy the DFO that their farm will not adversely impact wild salmon stocks.
- This approach provides clarity to industry and outlines our expectations moving forward for a sustainable industry that protects wild salmon, embraces reconciliation and provides good jobs for local communities.
- This is the new provincial policy approach to salmon farm tenures. The 'pause' put in place by the previous government is no longer in effect.
- Operational procedures for tenuring decisions have now been updated to reflect this policy.
- Our government has committed to addressing the concerns of First Nations and all British Columbians when it comes to salmon farming.
- The Province is dedicated to meaningful engagement with First Nations as demonstrated by this new policy, the work done in the Broughton and legislation to implement the principles of UNDRIP.
- A number of operators already have agreements with First Nations. Those types of partnerships will grow and lead to more predictability over the long term as First Nations and industry work together.

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If asked about the federal government requiring companies to transition from open net-pen salmon farming in B.C. by 2025:

- **I am aware of the federal government's intentions and timelines regarding their commitment to closed containment and look forward to hearing more about their recommended approach and transition plans.**

KEY FACTS:

In June 2018, B.C. announced a new approach to salmon farm tenures which incorporates some of the key recommendations made by the Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Council on Finfish Aquaculture (MAACFA).

The previous policy update was implemented in 2015 following government direction to "pause" approvals for salmon aquaculture tenure applications and restrict amendments to existing tenures.

Provincial Land Act policy was updated on July 19, 2019, and replaces the "pause" and, as of June 2022, will require applicants for provincial finfish aquaculture tenures to meet two conditions:

- Condition 1: have satisfied Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) that their operations will not adversely impact wild salmon stocks, and
- Condition 2: have negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate.

The delay between the policy update in July 2019 and its effective date in June 2022 is to provide reasonable time for salmon aquaculture tenure-holders to either meet the two conditions or plan for the decommissioning of the site. The updated policy allows industry the ability to apply for new sites in areas where operators can reach agreement with First Nations.

The 2022 deadline set within the new provincial policy aligns with the 2022 expiry of federal (DFO) licences for 95 of the 120 finfish aquaculture tenures.

The July 2019 policy update does not affect the 2008 moratorium north of Klemtu (52.50 degrees) or the 2013 restrictions in place in the Discovery Islands.

Government is also implementing the recommendations set out under the collaborative agreement with three Broughton area First Nations, the federal government and industry, and has developed a transition plan for 17 finfish tenures in the area.

To date, the Province has received four applications to amend existing fish farm tenures to absorb production losses by the Broughton process.

Industry has told DFO that between the three main operators (Mowi Canada West, Cermaq Canada Ltd., and Grieg Seafood Canada) they intend on submitting up to 24 amendment

ADVICE TO MINISTER

applications in 2019. These requested amendments are to address sites that will be closed both due to the Broughton recommendations and the new 2022 policy (i.e., operators are aware of some areas where agreement with First Nations is unlikely).

Industry members and First Nations were provided information in July 2019 regarding the changes to the policy.

On December 13, 2019, Bernadette Jordan, federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard received a new mandate letter which included direction to develop a transition plan on aquaculture in British Columbia:

“Work with the province of British Columbia and Indigenous communities to create a responsible plan to transition from open net-pen salmon farming in coastal British Columbia waters by 2025...”

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: June 8, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Agri-Tech Land Use Secretariat

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **Food security is vital to our economy. Our government is working hard to ensure we have a safe and resilient local food system now and for generations to come.**
- **The Food Security Task Force (FSTF) report delivered earlier this year, provided strategic advice and recommendations for how technology and innovation can be developed, grown and broadly adopted to strengthen B.C.'s agriculture sector and food security across the province.**
- **The Ministry of Agriculture is studying how the recommendations can fit within our government's core values of promoting farming and protecting farmland.**
- **The report has lots of great ideas that speak to our values and we are already hard at work, putting these actions into place.**
- **For example, the Agritech Innovation Challenge, regional food innovation hubs and cost-shared funding through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership align with the recommendations of the task force and will help the agriculture industry continue to thrive in British Columbia.**
- **Recommendation #4 in the report identified the need to ensure there is a place to grow food and support emerging agri-tech industries.**
- **We've now established the Agri-Tech Land Use Secretariat to review recommendation #4 and engage with stakeholders to develop policy recommendations that would increase food security and support the Ministry of Agriculture's ongoing efforts to build a safe, sustainable and resilient food system.**
- **The Secretariat will be in close collaboration with the ALC and work to develop policy recommendations that would increase food security**

and support the Ministry of Agriculture's ongoing efforts to build a safe, sustainable and resilient food system.

- **The Secretariat reports to me as the Minister of Agriculture.**
- **I will review any recommendations on next steps and will only proceed if the proposed changes are consistent with our government's core values of promoting farming and protecting farmland.**

If asked – Why was the existing Deputy Minister moved into this role and why the change in title?

- **On May 1, Deputy Minister to the Premier Don Wright appointed Wes Shoemaker “to lead the effort to plan for the establishment of agri-industrial land zones” in response to recommendation #4 in the Food Security Task Force report on the future of B.C.'s food system.**
- **On May 20, after discussions, the role was further clarified, and Wes Shoemaker was named the head of the new Agri-tech Land Use Secretariat.**
- **The role calls for a senior official with extensive knowledge of government processes, access to government systems and experts and insight into government's food security mandate who will take responsibility for preparing recommendations to Cabinet.**

If asked – Why is government going ahead with establishing agri-industrial zones in the face of opposition from agrologists, land use planners, soil experts and others?

- **Our government is committed to protecting the land that grows our food and getting it into production.**
- **To be clear, there has been no decision to establish an Agri-industrial zone. While this was the recommendation of the task force, it is just one type of land use policy/option that government could consider.**
- **The Secretariat will develop several options that will be brought forward for Cabinet consideration.**
- **Over the past decade, the agri-tech industry has taken off and what we're doing is looking for places where these businesses can set up that make the most sense.**
- **For example, Terramera is currently doing pilot projects on farms across B.C. looking at ways to reduce the use of pesticides in fields but they are spread out in office buildings in Vancouver.**
- **We're trying to support the agri-tech industry in a way that doesn't take away from the parts of agriculture we believe in so much.**

ADVICE TO MINISTER

KEY FACTS:

On May 1, Deputy Minister to the Premier Don Wright appointed Wes Shoemaker “to lead the effort to plan for the establishment of agri-industrial land zones” in response to recommendation #4 in the Food Security Task Force report on the future of B.C.’s food system.

On May 20, Minister Popham sent a letter to Ministry of Agriculture staff with an update outlining that Wes Shoemaker will be the head of the Agri-tech Land Use Secretariat. The purpose of the Secretariat, as outlined in its mandate, is to engage with stakeholders to develop options for government on land use policies that will increase opportunities for agri-tech sector growth.

The initial areas of focus will include:

- Review of current inventory of available lands for expansion of agri-tech sector.
- Evidence-based assessment of opportunities and barriers for gaining access to lands.
- Review of potential policy, program or land use tools that government may consider to address land use issues
- Stakeholder engagement.

In January 2020, the Food Security Task Force released its findings and four recommendations in the Future of B.C.’s Food System final report (the “FTSF” report). The recommendations included:

- applying the United Nation’ Sustainable Development Goals to agricultural policies;
- establishing an incubation/acceleration strategy for B.C.’s agri-tech sector;
- creating an agriculture and agri-tech institute in B.C. in partnership with post-secondary institutions; and
- reviewing land use planning policies and regulations to ensure B.C.’s agri-tech sector has a place to grow.

With respect to Recommendation #4, the report called for government to ensure there is a place to grow food and support emerging agri-tech industries by examining land use policies and other regulatory considerations. The report recommended allocating up to a maximum of 0.25% of the Province’s Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for agricultural-industrial use and establishing an agri-industrial zone. The ALR is 4,613,015 ha in area (ALC 2018/19 Annual Report), and 0.25% is 11,533 hectares (approx. the area of the City of Vancouver). The Task Force had also recommended that government establish a Commissioner as the statutory decision maker for agri-industrial lands.

It is important to note that recommendations received from an external Task Force are not necessarily adopted exactly as proposed.

These specific recommendations have been the subject of opposition that includes soil experts, former NDP cabinet minister and former government staff, academics, land use planners and professional agrologists among others. On May 19th, a group of 23 wrote a letter to the Premier and Minister stating their opposition to these actions and the appointment of Wes Shoemaker to lead this initiative.

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**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture

Date: June 2020

Minister Responsible: Minister Lana Popham

**ALC – Fraser Valley
Gleaners – Recovery
Home Decision
(ALC 56713)**

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Land use decisions within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) are up to the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC).
- The ALC is an administrative tribunal – arm's length from government – and government does not interfere in that independent decision-making process.
- The ALC looks at many factors when carrying out its mandate and each application has its own distinct set of circumstances and is considered on its own merits.

If asked: ALC Application Denial on Recovery Home:

- Our government has made the first major investment in women's transition housing in more than two decades, and we're building new supportive housing connecting people to mental health and addictions care and helping people become healthy again.
- We've increased the rates paid to recovery home operators for the first time in a decade to help alleviate rising cost pressures and support operators to ensure better care for people in recovery homes.
- Our government is building new housing and improving care so that people can get the help they need.
- The ALC found that the continued use of the principal residence, craft room, and fitness room for non-farm purposes does not provide a benefit to agriculture, and therefore fails to meet the mandate of the commission.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

- **Questions about specific applications or decisions should be addressed to the ALC, and let me be clear... I do not... and will not interfere in the decision making of an independent tribunal.**
- **I have asked senior officials in the Ministry of Agriculture to work across provincial ministries to make sure that the centre is connected to the various provincial programs and services available as they consider alternate locations.**

BACKGROUND

The ALC is an independent administrative tribunal comprised of appointed Commissioners that are responsible for administering the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA). The purposes of the ALC as set out in Section 6 of the Act are:

- to preserve the Agricultural Land Reserve;
- to encourage farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
- 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.

On July 29, 2019, Fraser Valley Gleaners submitted a request for reconsideration of the ALC's decision denying the proposal to continue using the principle residence, existing accessory buildings, and surrounding area for a supportive recovery home. The ALC found the submission did not meet the requirements for reconsideration.

The supportive recovery centre started on the property prior to receiving approvals from the City of Abbotsford or ALC. The City of Abbotsford's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw designation for the property is Agriculture and Agricultural One Zone, respectively, which do not allow supportive recovery use on the property.

The ALC has refused the use of the property for a recovery centre but has allowed the applicant two years before taking enforcement action (June 2021). The enforcement actions are not determined at this time. After the two-year period, ALC would work with the City of Abbotsford to determine next steps for compliance or enforcement to satisfy the ALCA and local zoning bylaws. For clarity, the ALCA does not provide powers to evict occupants.

On June 4, 2019, the ALC issued a decision denying an application from Fraser Valley Gleaners to allow the use of the house, existing accessory buildings, and surrounding area on the property as a location for a supportive recovery home use.

The ALC based their decision on whether the existing non-farm use activity would further impact the agricultural utility of the property. Based on the agricultural capability ratings, they determined that the property has mixed prime and secondary agricultural capability.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

The ALC found that the continued use of the principal residence, craft room, and fitness room for non-farm purposes does not provide a benefit to agriculture, and therefore fails to meet the mandate of the commission.

The ALC also found that additional farm buildings and agricultural infrastructure may be required should the property be used for agriculture and that the presence of these non-farm buildings further reduces the amount of arable land available for agriculture, and that the continued use of the property for non-farm purposes could alienate the property from future agricultural endeavors.

The ALC understands that Adult & Teen Challenge Society of BC desires to use the existing buildings on the Property as a “quiet, stable location for women in recovery”, the ALC considered that the priority use of land within the ALR is for agriculture. The ALC finds that the proposal should be located on lands outside of the ALR, on parcels that are not designated for agricultural use.

The ALC understands that the supportive recovery home use offers an important societal service. As such, in order to provide Adult & Teen Challenge Society of BC with a reasonable amount of time to relocate their supportive recovery home operation to a more appropriate location outside of the ALR, the ALC will defer enforcement actions against the contravention for a period of two (2) years from the date of the release of this decision (June 4, 2019).

In a media report, Abbotsford Women's Centre regional director Angie Appenheimer says the news isn't a surprise, but its residents were shocked and scared at first. Appenheimer said: “My hope would be that the ALC would kind of see that greater good and be a partner in recovery instead of a hinderance to what we're doing.”

Adult and Teen Challenge Society provides services for women trapped in addictive lifestyles. The organization is worldwide with more than 1,400 centres in 122 countries. The Gleaners Society and Board highly endorse and highly recommend the organization.

Staff at the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Mental Health, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing have met to coordinate efforts with the Abbotsford Women's Centre. For example, contacts were provided for the BC Housing Development Director in case individuals need to be relocated, or in case the Centre is interested in pursuing housing development funds.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

<p>CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture Date: June 12, 2020 Minister Responsible: Minister Lana Popham</p>	<p>Chilcotin ranchers flood support</p>
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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Ranchers are synonymous with the Cariboo, and the B.C. government is supporting their recovery from last year's floods.
- Though disasters happen quickly, recovering takes time. And as ranchers in the Cariboo know from the devastating wildfires in 2017 and 2018, the B.C. government is there for them, and working hard to help keep them on their land.
- Ministry staff were on the ground in Big Creek and helping assess impacted properties shortly after the floodwater subsided last July; staff worked with the Cariboo Cattlemen Association, the BC Cattlemen's Association, the Cariboo Regional District and more than 20 impacted producers in the area to see how we could best help.
- We made support available to offset the cost of hay to Cariboo ranchers, who had to purchase more hay than normal due to flooding. This initiative has, so far, supported over 30 applicants with \$370,000.
- This additional support helps keep cattle fed and ranches operating, supports communities and business in the Cariboo-Chilcotin, and results in more great-tasting B.C. beef on our tables.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has processed all claims for producers that had insured their crops.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

BACKGROUND

The B.C. government is helping ranchers in the Cariboo and Chilcotin feed their livestock this winter following forage loss due to flooding this summer and fall.

The Province will provide additional assistance of \$45.50 per ton of hay to Cariboo ranchers who are required to purchase more hay than they normally would due to flooding. This assistance is in addition to production insurance claims.

Support will also be provided to cover freight costs should ranchers choose to move their cattle to feed instead of buying forage.

B.C. government staff have been worked with the Cariboo Cattlemen Association, the BC Cattlemen's Association, the Cariboo Regional District.

Government made up to \$1,000,000 in support available to offset the cost of hay to Cariboo ranchers. The initiative has received more than 30 applications and to-date has provided support of approximately \$370,000. The program is awaiting final information from remaining producers whereupon these applications will be finalized. The program closed June 1, 2020. It is estimated the program will pay over \$400,000 upon finalization.

The initiative was endorsed by the British Columbia Cattlemen's Association and the Cariboo Cattlemen Association.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture

Date: June 18, 2020

Minister Responsible: Minister Lana Popham

BC meat inspection program

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The main priority of British Columbia's meat inspection system is to ensure the meat being produced in our province is safe for consumers.
- At the same time, we want to make sure we are providing enough slaughter and meat processing facilities for the entire province and to look at ways we can enhance the system.
- British Columbians enjoy beef, pork, lamb and poultry raised in our province, and we are looking at inspection models that encourage more livestock and poultry production and processing in B.C.
- For example, we recently increased opportunities for more local meat sales in retail and restaurants in the Alberni Valley, Central Kootenays and Robson Valley by expanding Class D licences.
- The Ministry is also looking into the potential of new 'Made in B.C.' options to the traditional model of meat inspection, that would further build on our system, and respond to concerns over slaughter capacity that have existed for many years.
- British Columbians can be confident that our meat inspection system will continue to support the highest standards of food safety, and support consumer and retail confidence in B.C. meat.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has about 50 employees who conduct inspection duties at provincially licensed Class A and B abattoirs in British Columbia.
- B.C. government staff provide information to support applicants in meeting requirements in the abattoir licensing process

ADVICE TO MINISTER

BACKGROUND

B.C. offers 4 classes of slaughter licence under the BC Meat inspection Regulation.

There are 57 Class A and B licences and 96 Class D and E licences in B.C.

Provincially-licensed Class A and B abattoirs can be located anywhere in the province, have no restrictions on the type or number of animals that can be slaughtered, may source animals from anywhere in the province, and can sell their products to any buyers within B.C. Class A and B licences authorize slaughter. Class A abattoirs may also operate a meat processing facility, which is licensed and inspected by Regional Health Authorities.

Class D and E licences allow a restricted volume of on-farm slaughter for farmers whose needs cannot be met by Class A and B slaughter facilities. Class D licences are issued in designated regional districts that do not have the volume of livestock production or human population to sustain a Class A or B abattoir. Class D licence holders are permitted to sell their meat at the farm gate, at farmers markets, and to retail establishments. In June 2020, updates to the Meat Inspection Regulation allowed Class D licences in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District as well as Electoral Area D of the Regional District of Central Kootenay and Electoral Area H of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. There are now 13 such designated areas in B.C.

Class E applicants can submit a Feasibility Study to identify their unique slaughter needs that cannot be met by local Class A and B licensed abattoirs. Meat from D and E licences can only be sold within the regional district (or electoral area, if applicable) in which it was produced.

In early 2020, The Ministry of Agriculture posted a Short-Form Request for Proposals (SRFP) on BC Bid for \$20,000 for a contractor to conduct a comprehensive survey of alternatives to traditional meat slaughter inspection.

The contract was awarded in March 2020. The report was recently finalized and provided information on the following:

- systems applied in other jurisdictions;
- identify potential new options to the traditional model of meat inspection, and;
- make recommendations for the implementation in B.C. for meat produced in provincially licensed Class A and B establishments;

The report also includes the methods of meat slaughter inspection for remote, small scale rural applications where it is not practical to have an inspector present and considers how these methods could be implemented in provincially licensed Class D and E establishments.

The report will address the balance of the increasing demand for traditional inspection services as demand for local meat grows, B.C.'s diverse population distribution and geography, maintaining high standards for food safety and animal welfare, while recognizing the economic realities of the meat production business.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: Feb. 3, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Site C

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The development of Site C is estimated to permanently displace approximately 3,800 hectares of Class 1 to 5 agricultural lands (land capable of crop production) in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). However, nearly 3 million hectares of quality land will remain available for agricultural production in the region.
- In recognition of the important role agriculture plays in the Peace River region and the potential effects of the Site C project on agriculture, BC Hydro has created a \$20 million Agricultural Compensation Fund to support agricultural production and related economic activity in the Peace Region.
- A regional decision-making board is responsible for overseeing the fund's management and disbursement.
- The ten-member board was appointed in 2018 and consists of six members that are appointees of regional agricultural associations or the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), one member who is a Peace River Valley agricultural producer, and three members-at-large.
- As of April 2020, about \$400,000 has been distributed to 16 projects including:
 - Forage Extension and Mentorship Program through the Peace River Forage Association of BC;
 - Haskap berry project involving the planting of 5000 plants at Hasberry Farms;
 - Indoor Growing Facility for microgreens and lettuce through Eden Greens; and
 - Pulse Processing Feasibility Study at Summit Acre Farms.
- The B.C. government has also committed to establishing a new dedicated B.C. Food Security Fund in or after 2024 – based on Site C revenues – dedicated to supporting farming and enhancing agricultural innovation and productivity across B.C.

KEY FACTS:

In December 2017, the Province announced that in moving forward with the Site C project, government will launch a Site C turnaround plan to contain project costs while adding tangible benefits. The plan will include:

- A new Project Assurance Board that will provide enhanced oversight to future contract procurement and management, project deliverables, environmental integrity, and quality assurance.
- Establishment of new community benefits programs, mandated with making sure that project benefits assist local communities, and increasing the number of apprentices and First Nations workers hired onto the project.
- A new BC Food Security Fund – based on Site C revenues – dedicated to supporting farming and enhancing agricultural innovation and productivity in the province.

In addition to funding for provincewide food security projects and programs, the turnaround plan will:

- Ensure the Peace River Legacy Fund implements solutions to longer-term environmental, social and economic issues.
- Activate the BC Hydro \$20-million Agricultural Compensation Fund to offset lost sales and stimulate long-term productivity enhancements in Peace Valley agriculture.

SITE C - \$20 MILLION AGRICULTURAL COMPENSATION FUND

As part of the environmental approvals for the Site C project, the Environmental Assessment Certificate required BC Hydro to develop a framework and plan for agricultural mitigation and compensation.

This plan includes a governance structure for a \$20 million Peace Agricultural Compensation Fund that is intended to support the Peace Region's agricultural industry.

In consultation with regional agricultural stakeholders and the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, a framework plan was completed in July 2016 and the plan was finalized in July 2017. The fund was formally established in early 2018.

The BC Hydro Peace Agricultural Compensation Fund is governed by a regional decision-making board, responsible for overseeing the management and disbursement of the fund. The 10-member board is comprised of six members that are appointees of regional agricultural associations or the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), one member who is a Peace River Valley agricultural producer and three members-at-large.

On September 5, 2018, BC Hydro appointed the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) as the financial administrator of the fund. Applications for funding are accepted on an ongoing basis and funds are distributed bi-annually.

SITE C - THE B.C. FOOD SECURITY FUND

As part of its decision making on the continuation of the Site C Project, government committed to several measures intended to address concerns raised during the 2017 Site C review. The B.C. Food Security Fund – based on Site C revenues – is one these measures. The fund will be dedicated to supporting farming and enhancing agricultural innovation and productivity across the entire province (compared to BC Hydro's Agricultural Mitigation Fund, which is specific to the Peace Region).

In February 2018, Treasury Board provided direction that provincial contributions for the BC Food Security Fund, along with two other Site C legacy initiatives – an Indigenous-focused clean energy

ADVICE TO MINISTER

program (ICEP), and Peace River Legacy Fund (PRLF) – must be funded out of incremental revenues to be paid to the Province by BC Hydro once Site C goes into operation in 2024. As a result, it is anticipated that the BC Food Security Fund will be implemented sometime after that date.

AGRI has been in preliminary discussions with EMPR regarding the status and future scoping of this program. The Province will consult with Peace Valley residents and local governments, First Nations, agricultural producers and other stakeholders and others to inform the design and implementation of this new program. Future consultations may be informed by the engagement work on two other Site C legacy programs.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
ISSUES NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: July 20, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Direct Action – Animal Welfare

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **Our government fully respects the rights of people to peacefully protest. At the same time, without exception, we expect everyone to follow the law.**
- **We are hearing more about protestors undertaking extreme actions such as trespassing, sabotaging farm equipment, and posting images of farmers' children and threats of violence on social media.**
- **Most of these actions are illegal as well as being offside with how we must conduct ourselves and treat each other in a civilized society.**
- **Farmers, ranchers and food processors in B.C. must be able to conduct their work free of harassment and intimidation.**
- **The ministry has met with B.C. farmers to hear their concerns and is working on developing resources to help support farmers prepare for illegal trespassers.**
- **Anyone with concerns about the welfare of specific animals is asked to call the BC SPCA directly as they are mandated by our government under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA) to respond to animals in distress.**
- **The PCAA has among the strongest penalties in Canada for causing distress to an animal, up to \$75,000 and 24 months in prison.**
- **Action can be taken against anyone who causes distress to an animal in British Columbia.**

NATIONAL CODES OF PRACTICE:

- **Animal welfare is a priority in B.C. and government expects everyone to treat animals with care and respect.**
- **Our government takes the wellbeing of all animals extremely seriously and is continuing to strengthen the animal welfare laws and practices in our province.**
- **On June 1, 2019, the National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice were referenced in regulation as reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management in B.C., further strengthening animal welfare in the province.**
- **The Codes outline management practices such as animal handling, feed and water, housing, health and welfare management, and other practices.**
- **Livestock operators in B.C. are among the best in Canada and the Codes support their good work.**
- **Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, failure to abide by the Codes is not necessarily an offence, but following the Codes is a defence from conviction of animal distress.**
- **Referencing the Codes in regulation therefore provides an incentive to farmers and ranchers to follow these practices.**
- **Ministry staff continue to work with animal welfare stakeholders to monitor potential issues and ensure the necessary animal welfare policies and regulatory frameworks are in place in B.C.**

ROLE OF REGULATED COMMODITY BOARDS:

- **The Ministry has been working closely with the agricultural commodity boards in B.C. to encourage them to adopt and enforce animal welfare and biosecurity standards, and we are pleased with the progress on this issue.**
- **B.C. commodity boards have made animal care and biosecurity standards mandatory for their producers.**
- **I believe these actions strongly demonstrate how serious the B.C. farmed animal industry is about protecting animal health and welfare.**

ADVICE TO MINISTER

BC FARM INDUSTRY REVIEW BOARD (BCFIRB):

- **BCFIRB, an independent tribunal, is responsible for ensuring BC's commodity boards deliver sound marketing policy in the public interest. This includes ensuring animal welfare and biosecurity are managed in a way to ensure orderly marketing.**
- **BCFIRB also hears appeals of specific animal seizure and/or cost decisions of the BC SPCA under the PCAA to provide timely, animal welfare-focused decisions.**

ANIMAL WELFARE RESPONSE DUE TO COVID-19:

- **As part of our government's response to COVID-19, we made a pool of emergency funding available to ensure animals in a variety of animal facilities still received the care they needed.**
- **Funding is available for food, animal hygiene, habitat upkeep, veterinarian care, limited transportation, and repairs to equipment required to ensure the welfare of the animals in care.**
- **To-date, 13 animal care facilities have applied for funding and received over \$3.6 million. This includes, over \$1.4 million to BC SPCA and over \$1.8 million to the Vancouver Aquarium.**

KEY FACTS:

Animal welfare activists across Canada have undertaken increasingly extreme activities to gain media attention and publicize their views including publishing video and photos of farms and farmers' children on social media, sabotaging farm equipment, trespassing etc. While the Province of B.C. respects the rights of people to protest peacefully, it condemns any illegal activities related to freedom of expression.

Incidents/Protests in B.C.

In April 2019, media reported on animal activists at two farms in B.C., an egg laying operation in Chase where they alleged poor treatment of poultry, and a hog farm in Abbotsford. Around 60 protestors entered the barn where sows and piglets were kept as part of the protest, compromising the farm's biosecurity measures, while 150+ protestors remained on the road outside the farm.

Alberta Legislation

On Oct. 3rd, 2019 the government of Alberta announced it would introduce legislation designed “to punish illegal protesters who invade farms, options being proposed include:

- Fines up to \$10,000 for a first offence and up to \$25,000 for subsequent offences for individuals and up to \$200,000 for organizations, and imprisonment of up to 6 months.
- Amending the *Animal Health Act* so farmers affected by biosecurity breaches can recover their costs and so trespassers and protesters placing biosecurity at risk can be fined \$15,000 for first offences, then \$30,000 plus imprisonment of up to one year for repeat offences.
- Amending the *Provincial Offences Procedures Act* to increase the maximum amount of compensation awarded by the court from \$25,000 to \$100,000.”

Government Action on Animal Welfare

On June 1, 2019, the National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice were referenced in regulation as reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management in B.C. Referencing the Codes in regulation ensures better understanding of what is meant by “reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management” and protects farmers and ranchers where these practices are misperceived or challenged. The Codes outline practices for livestock and farm animal operators, including owners, managers, and employees. While failure to abide by the Codes is not necessarily an offence, following the Codes can become a defense from conviction of animal distress by the courts.

The Codes referenced in regulation cover beef, bison, hatching eggs, poultry breeders, chickens and turkeys, equines, farmed fox, farmed mink, pigs, pullets and laying hens, rabbits, sheep and veal cattle. The Dairy Code of Practice was referenced in regulation in July 9, 2015.

Overarching responsibility for B.C.’s biosecurity and animal welfare legislation rests with the Ministry of Agriculture. The BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) has legislated responsibility under its supervisory and appeal mandates for ensuring the regulated agriculture commodity boards (chicken, hatching egg, egg, turkey and dairy) establish and enforce appropriate animal welfare and biosecurity standards to maintain orderly marketing in their sectors. B.C.’s agricultural commodity boards and commissions (commodity boards) have legislated authorities to establish and enforce biosecurity and animal welfare standards to support orderly marketing. BCFIRB expects commodity boards to demonstrate informed and proactive risk management approaches by adopting enforceable standards to fulfill their statutory responsibilities and that measures are in place to enable them to respond quickly, effectively and appropriately to critical and emerging issues.

As of 2013, BCFIRB also has legislated appeal responsibilities to hear certain BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BCSPCA) animal seizure and cost decisions (including farm animals).

Animal Welfare response due to COVID-19

Animal welfare funding was made available out of contingencies to ensure animals in a variety of animal facilities received the care they needed during COVID-19. Funding is available for food, animal hygiene, habitat upkeep, veterinarian care, limited transportation, and repairs to equipment required to ensure the welfare of the animals in care. To-date, 13 animal care facilities have applied for funding and received a total of \$3.6 million.

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- This includes:
 - \$1,850,100 to Vancouver Aquarium
 - \$1,463,342 to BCSCPA
 - \$66,974 to DBA Kangaroo Farm
 - \$56,512 to Victoria Single Horse Drawn Carriage Tours
 - \$52,897 to Capital City Tally-Ho & Sightseeing
 - \$53,200 to Turtle Valley Donkey Refuge
 - \$40,550 to Paws for Hope Animal Foundation
 - \$10,283 to Medicine Horse Sanctuary Society
 - \$7,547 to Feral Cat Rehabilitation Centre (SAFARS)
 - \$7,408 to Ucluelet Aquarium
 - \$5,300 to Urban Safari Rescue Society
 - \$4,862 to Circle F horse rescue
 - \$3,411 to Little Mittens Rescue

Industry Action on Animal Welfare

Animal welfare incidents in dairy, eggs and chicken had serious impacts to these industries and their value chains, highlighting the importance of effectively ensuring appropriate animal welfare standards are followed and enforced. B.C. commodity boards have either made the relevant National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice mandatory for licensed producers or made national agency animal-care programs, that are based on the Codes of Practice mandatory for licensed producers.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

B.C.'s Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA) was updated in 2011 to have among the toughest penalties in Canada. Under the PCAA, charges can be laid against anyone who causes suffering or distress to an animal in British Columbia. The maximum penalties that can be levied under provincial legislation against a person who is convicted of causing distress to an animal is \$75,000 and up to 24 months imprisonment. The BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) is mandated by the B.C. Government through the PCAA to respond to animals in distress. The B.C. Government encourages anyone who suspects animal cruelty or distress to report the events to the BCSPCA so they can be fully investigated. The PCAA also requires veterinarians to report to the BCSPCA any contraventions of the PCAA they encounter in their duties.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: July 17, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Cat and Dog Breeders Regulations

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- There have been too many times in recent years when the BC SPCA has seized domestic animals in poor health from irresponsible breeders.
- We are building a regulatory framework that supports responsible dog and cat breeders and sellers of their offspring in B.C., and outlines consequences for those that aren't.
- When the framework was introduced in 2016, it was done without a plan and without dedicated resources, which we are continuing to develop with stakeholders.
- This will be a made-in-B.C. solution, and we are taking the time to get this right.
- The Ministry of Agriculture will continue to meet with stakeholders including the SPCA, breeders and concerned MLAs to inform the development of the framework.
- We anticipate the regulatory framework may include minimum standards of care and related penalties, a breeder and seller registration system, an inspection program, and ongoing public and industry education and training support.
- The framework under the B.C. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act may include charges against anyone who causes suffering or distress to an animal in B.C., including dog and cat breeders and sellers of their offspring.
- In the meantime, we have made emergency animal welfare funding available during the pandemic to ensure animals in facilities like the SPCA receive the care they need. To-date, we've given \$1.4 million to the SPCA and over \$3.6 million in total to 13 animal care facilities.

KEY FACTS:

In spring 2017, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was updated to establish a broad framework for licensing or registration of commercial dog and cat breeders and sellers of their offspring. This includes inspections against minimum Standards of Care. The goal of the regulatory framework is to address puppy mills and other irresponsible breeders, and those that profit from selling these animals. The details including the activity for which a license/registration is required may be defined by regulation. This regulatory work has been delayed due to COVID-19 priorities.

Key stakeholders that the Ministry of Agriculture continues to consult include the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Canadian Kennel Club, Canadian Cat Association, individual breeders, veterinarians, and local governments.

Following extensive consultation, the Ministry of Agriculture contemplated and is building the regulatory framework based on four key pillars:

- Standards of Care: Mandatory minimum standards of care based on the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Codes of Practice for kennels and catteries and extensive expert and stakeholder advice)
- Mandatory Registration: Requiring all breeders and sellers to register and to display their registration number in all advertising and sales
- Inspection and Compliance: Development of risk-based inspections and strong penalties for non-compliance
- Education and awareness include material to support breeders, sellers, and buyers

In 2016, the B.C. government enshrined the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's Codes of Practice for both kennel and cattery operations as generally accepted management practices for cat and dog breeders in B.C. The Codes of Practice include requirements respecting housing, ventilation, food and water, care and supervision, record-keeping, behavioural needs, socialization and transportation.

B.C. has a strong legal framework for animal welfare and many actions have been implemented through legislation, partnerships with the sector, funded programs or research with advanced education.

B.C. has some of the toughest animal distress penalties in Canada. The maximum penalties under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act include up to two years in prison and a \$75,000 fine.

Animal Welfare response due to COVID-19

Animal welfare funding was made available out of contingencies to ensure animals in a variety of animal facilities received the care they needed during COVID-19. Funding is available for food, animal hygiene, habitat upkeep, veterinarian care, limited transportation, and repairs to equipment required to ensure the welfare of the animals in care. To-date, 13 animal care facilities have applied for funding and received a total of \$3.6 million.

- This includes:
 - \$1,850,100 to Vancouver Aquarium
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ADVICE TO MINISTER

**CONFIDENTIAL
GCPE ISSUE NOTE**

Ministry of Agriculture
Date: July 20, 2020
Minister Responsible: Lana Popham

Insurance for additional residences in ALR

RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- When Bill 52 came into force in February 2019, it changed the rules about who could permit additional residences on ALR parcels.
- Before Bill 52, a local government could permit additional residences if it considered them necessary for farm use, now it is the Agricultural Land Commission – that was the only change.
- And while, the ministry has heard anecdotal accounts of difficulties in renewing insurance in the last year, the reality is insurance agencies factor in numerous considerations when renewing insurance.
- Quite simply, if a landowner wants to build a new additional residence, the appropriate permits are required from local government, and if the land is inside the ALR, the residence must be permitted by the ALR Regulation or approved by the ALC.
- If the purpose of the residence is to help with or advance the farming activities, then there is a path forward with the ALC through an application for approval.
- There is no limit to the amount of applications that you can put forward to the ALC for homes that can be built that support the family farm.
- The vast majority of these types of applications to the ALC have been approved since the changes made by Bill 52 came into force.
- As of March 31, 2020, the ALC has approved 72% of the 71 additional residence decisions they've made.
- The ALC is an independent tribunal charged to protect farmland and encourage farming; it is arm's length from government and has its own independent decision-making process.

BACKGROUND:

The Opposition has raised the issue of insurance on secondary residences, pointing out that changes in Bill 52 make it harder for farmers to get insurance renewed if their secondary residence is damaged or destroyed by a fire, flood or other catastrophic event. The Opposition also argues that these changes also prohibit a secondary residence from being automatically rebuilt if damaged or destroyed.

If a local government approved an additional residence before February 2019 and that residence was destroyed, it is possible the landowner would not now be able to rebuild that residence. The ALC might evaluate the residence's "necessity for farm use" differently than the local government had, and not permit the reconstruction of that additional residence. However, that same risk existed prior to February 2019 if a local government did not consider the residence necessary for farm use after the residence was destroyed.

In terms of insurance, this could lead to a situation where the landowner pays for replacement insurance but is unable to replace the additional residence. They would likely still be able to receive an insurance payout for the depreciated value of the home, but that is usually less than the amount they would receive to rebuild the home.

There is no right of replacement if an existing residence is destroyed. If 75% or more of a building is damaged, then fixing it is considered a replacement and an owner will have to conform to new rules on principle residence size and additional residences. This rule reflects a similar approach by local governments to non-conforming structures.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

<p>CONFIDENTIAL GCPE ISSUE NOTE</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture Date: July 23, 2020 Minister Responsible: Lana Popham</p>	<p>Discovery Islands Aquaculture</p>
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RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Wild Pacific salmon are of great social, environmental, historical and economic importance to B.C. They sustain communities and generated a wholesale value of almost \$236 million in 2018.
- Pacific salmon stocks have suffered disastrous declines brought on by many factors and this problem requires diverse tools and perspectives to help maintain and restore current wild salmon stocks.
- This is why our government has taken significant action over the last three years to protect and restore wild salmon stocks while creating a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.
- We launched the Wild Salmon Advisory Council in 2018 whose final report is now helping to inform a made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy to assist salmon recovery.
- We've also worked with the federal government, through the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), to support 41 projects to-date, totalling \$69 million in funding.
- The BCSRIF is a \$143 million cost-shared fund targeting protection and restoration of salmon habitat as well as ensuring the fish and seafood sector in B.C. is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.
- We've also provided \$5 million to the Pacific Salmon Foundation to help grassroots organizations and their communities protect important species for the next generation.
- Our government is committed to working with the federal government, first nations, environmental groups and industry to ensure strong, healthy wild salmon stocks are available for future generations.

If asked about tenures in Discovery Islands:

- **In response to the Cohen Commission recommendations, the Province put a moratorium in place on any new aquaculture tenures in the Discovery islands until September 30, 2020.**
- **The moratorium will remain in place until DFO renders their decision on whether salmon farms in the area are causing significant harm to Fraser River salmon stocks.**

If asked about sea lice infestations and treatment (from ENV):

- **Indigenous Nations and the public have expressed concerns about pesticides being applied in aquaculture. We've heard those concerns and will work with our federal counterparts as new aquaculture rules are brought in.**
- **Decisions to issue permits are made by a Statutory Decision Maker, from the Ministry of Environment, who is guided by policy that ensures sea lice treatment methods are supported by the best available science.**
- **Pesticides used in aquaculture have been thoroughly evaluated and approved by Health Canada to ensure their general use will not result in adverse impacts to human health and the environment.**

BACKGROUND:

The Discovery Islands aquaculture region represents 20% of all currently licensed B.C. salmon farming operations, which collectively are worth \$818 million (2018) in wholesale value. The region is bounded by the Broughton Archipelago to the north and the Strait of Georgia to the south.

There are four finfish aquaculture companies operating in this area through 22 farm sites: MOWI Canada West (16 farms), Cermaq Canada (3 farms), Grieg Seafood (1 farm), Yellow Island Aquaculture (1 farm), and Saltspring Engineering (1 farm). All operators grow Atlantic salmon except Yellow Island which grows Chinook salmon. Farmed salmon is the largest contributor to B.C. seafood revenues.

MOWI is the main operator in the area and the largest sector employer in B.C. It holds 28,527 kg of licensed capacity in the area through eight active sites. This represents 27% of the company's province-wide production and 80% of all finfish farm capacity in the Discovery Islands. Additionally, MOWI currently holds all eight fallow sites in the area. Of all active sites, only one operation (Shaw Point - MOWI) is on a month to month tenure, with the remainder set to expire through 2034. Shaw Point recently experienced an escape of about 1,000 salmon, leading to criticism and request for removal by adjacent First Nations. There are also complaints around recent sea lice infestations impacting salmon. There is one application (from Greig

ADVICE TO MINISTER

Seafood) to treat sea lice with pesticide in the Discovery Islands which was received by ENV on July 16, 2020. DFO has required the facility to manage their sea lice.

The 2012 Cohen Commission resulted in three DFO actions specific to the Discovery Islands area, including Recommendation #19 which will determine whether DFO will continue to license farms in the area, pending scientific consensus on potential of harm to Fraser River stocks. If DFO finds that farms in the area pose more than a minimal risk to Fraser River stocks, no new licenses will be issued, and open pen salmon farming licensing will cease. The original deadline

s.16 The Province (through FLNRO) has a self-imposed moratorium on new tenuring in place pending the decision. The Province also has set a new Salmon Aquaculture Policy (SAP) whereby effective June 2022, no new tenures will be approved unless:

- The fish farm operator has negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate, and
- The operator can satisfy the DFO that their farm will not adversely impact wild salmon stocks.

The Province sets the policies regarding economic development, regulates processing and transportation (AGRI) and disposes the use of Crown Land for the purposes of aquaculture through tenure administration (FLNRO). The federal government (DFO) regulates the rearing of fish, fish health, environmental effects and implications to wild fish stocks.

ADVICE TO MINISTER

<p>CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture Date: August 4, 2020 Minister Responsible: Lana Popham</p>	<p>Seasonal Festivals</p>
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ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- I understand an application has been made to the ALC to host Glow fall and winter festivals on the Darvonda farm in Abbotsford, which is the correct process for holding large scale events in the ALR.
- Land use decisions within the Agricultural Land Reserve are up to the ALC.
- The ALC is an administrative tribunal – arm's length from government – and government does not interfere in that independent decision-making process.
- The ALC looks at many factors when carrying out its mandate and each application has its own distinct set of circumstances and is considered on its own merits.
- The application to the ALC follows agritourism regulations established by the previous government in 2016 that ALR land owners did not need to apply to the Commission to host activities like commercial weddings, concerts, or non-agriculture related festivals, providing:
 - The land has farm status
 - No new permanent structures are being built
 - All parking will be on the property (no road parking)
 - The number of guests is 150 or less
 - The number of annual events is 10 or less
- As the proposed festivals exceed the criteria, an application was made to the ALC for consideration, which again is the correct process, and one that government does not interfere with.

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FANTASY FARMS

- I understand from recent media reports that Fantasy Farms has received ALC approval to host more than 30 events that exceed the criteria in the regulation per year.
- This would allow them to hold events like Petey's Pumpkin Patch, Country Christmas, Garlic Fest, and Reapers, as well as weddings, providing they secure the approval of the local government to do so. The

ADVICE TO MINISTER

ALC approval of these events indicates to me that the Commission clearly recognizes the value these events have to farmers, and there is a place for them on ALR land, providing they align with the Commission's mandate of encouraging farming.

BACKGROUND:

On June 30, 2020 media reported organizers of the "Glow Harvest and Christmas" festivals had applied to the ALC for permission to host two large seasonal events in the greenhouses at Darvonda Nurseries which are on ALR land in Abbotsford.

The majority of Langley Township Council supported the application to hold "Glow Harvest" from Sept. 27 to Nov. 3, 2020 and "Glow Christmas" from Nov. 22 to Jan. 5, 2021 in greenhouses on the farm.

The media coverage also quotes ALC CEO Kim Grout as saying the tribunal aims to make decisions within 60 to 90 days of an application arriving.

In 2019, Darvonda Nurseries moved the events, which include light displays, food, and family attractions from their greenhouses to the Tradex Facility in Abbotsford, following an ALC decision the nursery would have to apply for a non-farm use permit to hold the events on their farm.

ALC investigators visited the Harvest festival in November 2018 and found the event did not meet ALC requirements for farm use because it did not meet the requirements of a "harvest festival" as multiple products other than those from the farm were being marketed and sold there. In March 2019 the Commission advised the land owners an application for a non-farm use would be required.

Darvonda chose not to apply for non-farm use permit for 2019, saying there was no guarantee permission would be granted, and pursued alternate sites for that year instead.

FANTASY FARMS

Chilliwack media reported the owners of Fantasy Farms received ALC permission to host 32 agri-tourism events that exceed the criteria described in the ALCA regulations per year, providing they get approval from the City of Chilliwack. The farm owners, Gary and Lisa Moran have indicated they will be pursuing an application with the City.

The article notes City of Chilliwack officials notified the Morans in 2019 that they'd received a complaint about the haunted house attraction the farm operates, which was determined to be a "non-conforming use" and led to a cease and desist order.

The article also mentions Fantasy Farms were advised in 2018 to apply for "non-farm use" designation from the ALC, in order to legitimize the continued use their agriculture buildings on farm land for popular events.

The Morans had asked the ALC for those non-conforming uses be "grandfathered in," but that request was rejected by the ALC's South Coast Panel in April 2019. They then applied for a reconsideration of that decision, focusing on the 0.4 hectare section of their property used for special events, and that was successful.

AGRICULTURE:

1. COVID: Response Main Message
2. COVID: Labour Shortages
3. ALR: Main Message
4. ALR: Abbotsford Women's Centre

COVID-19: Agriculture Response

Highlights:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the agriculture and food sector, including labour shortages and loss of markets/sales to changing distribution and commerce channels.

Main Message:

- The past few months have been difficult on everyone—including the 63,000 British Columbians who help put food on our tables
- B.C. farmers, ranchers, fishers, harvesters and processors are resilient by nature.
- Our government has been there to support these essential businesses and workers every step of the way.
- We've worked closely with industry stakeholders to:
 - Protect the health and safety of farm workers.
 - Help ensure farms have the labour they need for a successful harvest.
 - Connect British Columbians with job opportunities in the agriculture sector.
- I am also in regular contact with my federal counterparts to ensure our sector is supported.
- We're pleased that Ottawa has come to the table with significant direct support for farmers—including the new seafood stabilization fund.

On Food Security:

- This pandemic has also brought into focus for many of us our province's food security.
- It has shone a bright light on the need for our province to become more self-sufficient, more sustainable, and resilient.
- That's why the work we've been doing to get healthy, local food to BC families and businesses is more important than ever:
 - **Feed BC** which is getting more B.C.-grown and raised food in B.C. hospitals,
 - **Grow BC** which is increasing the amount of land being farmed, and
 - **Buy BC** which encourages people to purchase food grown and produced in B.C.
- In May, we launched the new **B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector** – a web-based portal to connect British Columbians with jobs in the sector.
- This will make it easier for employers and employees to connect so we can fill vacancies and get more British Columbians working to put fresh and local food on our tables.

COVID-19: Labour Shortages for Farmers & Producers

Highlights:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the agriculture and food sector, including labour shortages from less access to Temporary Foreign Workers.
- Mexico recently announced they were pausing flights of TFWs to parts of Canada over health and safety concerns after two men died of COVID-19 at a farm in Ontario. BC was exempt from this pause.

Main Message:

- The past few months have been difficult on everyone—including the 63,000 British Columbians who help put food on our tables
- Early on in this pandemic, we recognized the challenge farmers, ranchers, fishers, harvesters, and food processors would face accessing seasonal labour this year.
- That's why we worked with B.C. farming associations and the federal government to safely bring thousands of temporary workers to Canada.
- Our country-leading effort has kept workers safe, helped farmers operate with minimal disruption, and secured the food supply for British Columbians.
- We also recognized the need to connect unemployed British Columbians with jobs in the food sector.
- That's why we launched the new **B.C. Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector** – a web-based job portal.
- We will continue to work closely with the industry to ensure they have the labour they need to feed BC.

Background:

- The Province has supported the safe arrival of temporary foreign farm workers in B.C. by providing accommodation and meals to allow them to safely self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival to Canada as required by the federal Quarantine Act.
- The Province is funding hotel, food-service costs, translation services, health screening, and other necessary supports for these workers during the 14-day self-isolation period.
- All farms receiving Temporary Foreign Workers are required to have an Infection Control and Prevention Protocol in place prior to worker arrival.
- B.C. has also conducted inspections of the destination farm accommodations to ensure the good work undertaken to prevent transmission of COVID-19 is maintained.
- Of the more than 2,800 TFWs who have arrived since April 13, 2020, 23 have tested positive for COVID-19 with 17 fully recovering so far and now working on farms.
- These TFWs self-isolated in government accommodations while being monitored for symptoms and were only able to travel to farms once cleared by public health officials and deemed asymptomatic. This limited the potential for spread of COVID-19.

Agricultural Land Reserve

Highlights:

- The Opposition and critics of the ALR have accused the government of introducing legislative changes that are unfair and discriminatory to landowners.
- MLAs for Nechako and Delta-South introduced a bill on July 28 to repeal Bills 52 (2018) and 15 (2019).
- Several recent decisions from the Agricultural Land Commission have caused controversy and generated media attention.
- After wide-ranging consultations, the Ministry of Agriculture released a policy intentions paper that proposes more flexibility for landowners to build small secondary residences on the ALR.

Contrast:

- It's disappointing to hear this fear and misinformation from the Members opposite.
- For years, pressures on our farmland were allowed to grow and a “wild west” of rules was created on the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- The old government let wealthy speculators and big developers drive the price of farmland far out of reach for farmers and farming families.
- Earlier this month, a house in Richmond – in the riding of the Member for Richmond-Queensborough and built under the BC Liberal ALR rules, was listed on the market for \$21 million.
- That's the Opposition's sad record on farmland that our government is fixing.

- They let garbage and construction waste get illegally dumped on farmland – irreparably damaging our most valuable food producing land.
- They wrote the rules that restrict value-added activities on the ALR, like eateries, and limited secondary housing to family members only.
- We have no lessons to take from Members on the other side on this issue.
- Our government has been clear: Farmland is for farming.

Main Message:

- This pandemic has also brought into focus for many of us our province's food security.
- It has shone a bright light on the need for our province to become more self-sufficient, more sustainable, and more resilient.
- That's why protecting farmland and working to get fresh, local food to British Columbians is more important than ever.
- It underscores the hard work our government has done over the last 3 years to build a resilient, sustainable food system in BC.
- In addition to protecting the Agricultural Land Reserve for future generations, we've also invested in programs that help secure our local food supply:
 - **Feed BC** which is getting more B.C.-grown and raised food in B.C. hospitals,
 - **Grow BC** which is increasing the amount of land being farmed, and
 - **Buy BC** which encourages people to purchase food grown and produced in B.C.
- It's common sense: we need farmland, so farmers can farm and so we can all enjoy fresh, locally grown food.

- And as we've made changes to rules governing the ALR, we've been listening to farmers, farm families, and ordinary British Columbians—not only developers and speculators.

Secondary Message – residential flexibility options:

- We listened carefully to farmers and landowners on the ALR and worked closely with local governments.
- They told us they support protecting farmland but wanted more flexibility when it comes to housing.
- That's why we have proposed a change would enable landowners to have both a principal residence and a small secondary residence on their property.
- As long as they have the support of their local government, they would not need approval from the Agricultural Land Commission for these structures.
- What we're proposing would provide even more flexibility than under the old government to help farming families and landowners on the ALR thrive.

- By threatening to repeal changes made to the legislation to protect the ALR, the BC Liberals are saying yes to dumping garbage on farmland.
- They are saying yes to mega mansions on farmland.
- They are saying yes to destroying a land base that has been protected to ensure food security.
- They are saying yes to a confusing policy that they put in place and that has never helped farmers.
- Our government has been clear: Farmland is for farming.
- That's why we strengthened protections for the ALR and the strengthened the independence of the ALC.

[PIVOT]

- And its why we've introduced new initiatives to help farmers with the largest investments for agriculture in BC's history: Grow BC, Feed BC, Buy BC.
- And the results are clear:
 - Farm cash receipts increased 13.3% or \$462 million to a record \$3.924 billion in 2019.
 - Farmers net cash income rose from \$441 million to \$560 million, a 27% increase.

Validators:

Meghan McPherson, a prospective hobby farmer in Courtenay ... said she was elated that Popham has listened.

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[Meghan McPherson, Vancouver Sun, January 28, 2020]

Liberal agriculture critic Ian Paton said the changes make sense.

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[Ian Paton, Vancouver Sun, January 28, 2020]

ALC Abbotsford Women's Centre

Highlights:

- A June 2019 ALC decision requires a faith-based women's recovery centre to find a new location. It gave the applicant 2 years to find another location before it will contemplate enforcement action.
- The decision held that the centre did not need to be on farmland and would be better located outside of the ALR.

Main Message:

- I share the Member's concern for people in need and seeking addictions treatment.
- I hope we can all agree that helping people in our communities should be a top priority of government.
- The Premier did ask me to take a look at this particular decision—which my officials and I did.
- I have asked my officials to work with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and others to ensure the Centre is aware of various programs and services available to them as they consider their next steps.
- Ultimately, the Agricultural Land Commission has a mandate to protect farmland on the ALR.
- As the member knows, the ALC operates independently of government.
- The ALC has considered this application twice and it would be inappropriate for me to interfere with their decision.

Pivot Message:

- I'm not going to take any advice from the members opposite on supporting vulnerable people.
- They left behind a broken and fragmented mental health and addictions system that doesn't get people the care they need.
- They took away bus passes from people with disabilities and ignored a growing housing crisis.
- We're fixing their messes.
- We've increased the rates paid to recovery home operators for the first time in a decade.
- We've opened B.C.'s first mental health and substance use urgent response centre in Surrey.
- We're dramatically expanding access to free and affordable counselling.
- We've made the first major investment in women's transition housing in more than two decades.
- And we're building new supportive housing that connects people to the mental health care they need.

Push back against “eviction” claim:

- No one is getting evicted.
- The centre was given a two-year period to find a new location.
- After that time, it the ALC would work with the City of Abbotsford to determine next steps if necessary.