

How Can You Help?

An exciting new web resource is available for you to learn more and take action on the ALR:

<http://www.greenbelt.bc.ca>

You can also find out more about the ALR at:

B.C. Farmland Watch

<http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/BCFarmlandWatch.html>

Smart Growth BC

<http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index.cfm>

Soil and Water Conservation Society-BC

<http://www3.telus.net/swcs-bc/intro.html>

Society Promoting Environmental Conservation

<http://www.spec.bc.ca/>

Monitor ALR exclusion applications in your community and contact your local government about foodland protection.

Please consider writing a letter or sending an email to municipal and provincial politicians. Let them know that you support pro-agricultural policies – every voiced concern counts!

See the back of this brochure for addresses.



Vineyards, Okanagan Valley, B.C.

Who Should You Contact?

Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier
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Phone: 250-387-1715 Fax: 250-387-0087
premier@gov.bc.ca

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Phone: 604-660-7000 Fax: 604-660-7033
Kirk.Miller@gems1.gov.bc.ca

Honourable George Abbott, Minister
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
PO Box 9054, Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
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george.abbott.mla@leg.bc.ca

Honourable John Van Dongen, Minister
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
PO Box 9043, Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Phone: 250-387-1023 Fax: 250-387-1522
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Union of British Columbia Municipalities
Suite 60 10551 Shellbridge Way,
Richmond, BC V6X 2W9
Phone: 604-270-8226 Fax: 604-270-9116
ubcm@civicnet.bc.ca

Fraser Valley Regional District
Terry Raymond, Chair
45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6
Phone: 604-702-5000 Fax: 604-792-9684
info@fvrd.bc.ca traymond@fvrd.bc.ca

Greater Vancouver Regional District
4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8
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Add Your Local Contacts Here:

Threats to Your Foodlands Protecting B.C. Food Security

This pamphlet provides answers to the following questions:

- .. What is the Agricultural Land Reserve?
- .. Why should it be protected?
- .. How are foodlands threatened?
- .. What can YOU do about it?



Prime Farmland in the Fraser Valley, B.C.



Produced by:



Society Promoting
Environmental Conservation



SmartGrowthBC



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What is the ALR?

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. In 1973 the government of B.C. introduced the ALR to ensure that a secure area of land would be set aside for food production. For over 30 years the Agricultural Land Commission Act has proved to be a unique and effective piece of legislation.

The ALR covers approximately 4.7 million hectares or 5 % of B.C.'s total land base. It includes contiguous parcels covering thousands of hectares, as well as much smaller individual holdings of only a few hectares.

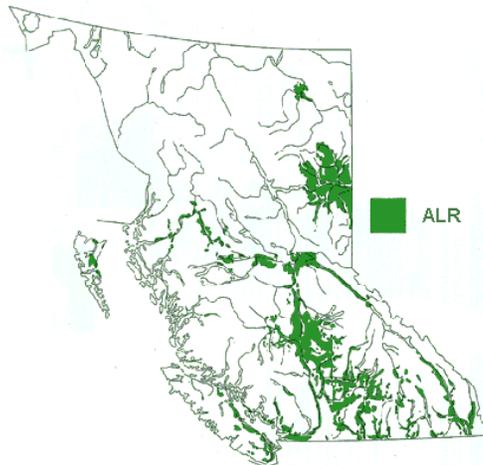
A supply of B.C.-grown food enhances food security both now and in the future for all B.C. residents. The presence of the ALR allows us to minimize our reliance on food grown outside of B.C. This lends support to local farmers and reduces our risk of being affected by declining global food production due to international resource management decisions and political trends.



Some of the best raspberry production in Canada is targeted for development, including these fields in Abbotsford, B.C.

Why Protect the ALR?

The Okanagan Valley, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island comprise less than 10% of the total ALR or 0.5% of the provincial land base, but their moderate climate and fertile soils are the basis for B.C.'s world-class agricultural productivity. Approximately \$1.8 billion or 80% of annual provincial farm gate sales - 200 different commodities - are produced in these 3 areas! It is critically important to protect every acre of ALR land in regions that are capable of producing such a wide variety of high quality agricultural products.



Map of ALR land in B.C.
http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/ALR_Map.htm

At the same time, however, 80% of B.C. residents live in these 3 critical agricultural areas and land use conflicts are increasing. A growing population requires efficient planning in existing residential areas, or else pressure is placed on ALR land for development. With proper planning there is enough urban-zoned land to handle future population expansion. By maintaining food production close to metropolitan areas farmers with fresh products will be able to readily access processing infrastructure and markets, and consumers will be provided with a varied selection of healthy, high quality local products.

How are Foodlands Threatened?



Suburban development encroaching on ALR land in B.C.

Permission to develop ALR land is granted by the provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Exclusion applications must be accepted by local council before being sent on to the ALC for a final decision. Recent changes to the ALC structure mean that regional panels, rather than a single provincial body, are now responsible for application decisions. Current exclusion applications include thousands of acres of prime farmland in Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Barnston Island, Maple Ridge, and Penticton.

ALR exclusions need to be framed with the provincial interest of food security for present and future British Columbians in mind. Communities must strive to manage growth within pre-existing urban areas and must not consider ALR land as a potential area for development. Improved densification of urban and industrial lands, edge planning, agricultural area planning and agriculture advisory committees are just some of the tools that local politicians can be encouraged to adopt to maintain a thriving agricultural sector and a sustainable urban community.

Most B.C. residents live in cities and do not often consider the critical importance of our foodlands. It is important to be reminded that urban and industrial development of ALR land will result in the permanent destruction of scarce, highly productive farmland.