CANADIAN
HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

Submitted by email: ALR_ALCRevitalization@gov.bc.ca

To Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this public engagement process on the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission.

Canadian Home Builders' Association British Columbia represents members in the residential construction industry across the province. Our 2,000-member companies are small and medium-sized home building companies, renovators, suppliers, tradespeople, manufacturers and other industry professionals.

The focus of CHBA BC's work thus far on this issue is within three of the themes identified for the consultation. A high-level summary of these issues is below.

Interpretation and implementation of the Act and regulation

Home builders in B.C. are challenged with navigating the processes for the ALR and the ALC. There are conflicting perspectives between local governments and the Commission creating confusion in interpretation and costly delays.

One such example would be ALR land parcels that are directly beside existing or expanding community plans or surrounded by currently developed lands. In order to recognize the ALR as a resource, but still effectively meet our population growth, more consistency is needed on how to align the ALC with municipal planning.

There is an opportunity to be creative in order to meet both the growing need for affordable housing and protection of our valuable farm land. For example, mechanisms like coordinated land swaps could help to strengthen the ALR. It could increase the amount of productive land in the boundaries, while allowing the less viable land where farming is unlikely as an opportunity for other uses. It could also be designated for specific purposes, such as certain types of construction, with robust mechanisms to remove any type of speculation or undue benefit.

It should be affirmed that CHBA BC is not at all advocating for a dismantling of the ALR in any capacity. The ALR is an important resource for the province. However, a discussion on how to revitalize the ALR in the most efficient manner could be beneficial for all.

Residential Uses in the ALR

There are many stories about lavish homes in the ALR boundaries, but this does not translate to all residential uses across the province within the ALR. It is quite possible that many existing family homes within the ALR will need to be replaced or renovated in the coming decades as they age, and licensed home builders will be contracted to assist.

Building off of work done in 2014, where retiring farmers can remain on their properties or second dwellings are possible, clear processes for residential uses will help home builders better advise their clients on aging in place and family needs.

Additional discussion is also needed on how to support the agricultural industry and the upcoming generation of farmers with the rising land costs. For example, as is taking place outside the boundaries,

multi-generation households do not have to co-exist in one home. There are options like secondary suites, granny flats, coach houses and more that can provide supplementary and reasonable housing options that are not “mega-mansions” nor high density.

Unauthorized uses

Lastly, CHBA BC does not condone any illegal dumping on agricultural land or any other area. This is a problem not limited to the agricultural land, and ties to broader issues in residential construction such as the underground economy. In order to fully address this issue, further coordination with other partners is the best route as it will not be solved through the ALC alone. CHBA BC is engaged on this issue in other areas and is pleased to provide further discussion on this topic.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. We would be pleased to participate in any further conversations on this topic on behalf of members.

Best regards,



Neil Moody

CEO

About CHBA BC:

The Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC is the provincial voice of the residential construction industry in British Columbia representing more than 2,000 members through an affiliated network of nine local home building associations located throughout the province. The industry contributes over $23.1 billion in investment value to British Columbia's economy creating 158,000 jobs in new home construction, renovation, and repair - one of the largest employers in British Columbia.