

Agricultural Land Reserve Overview

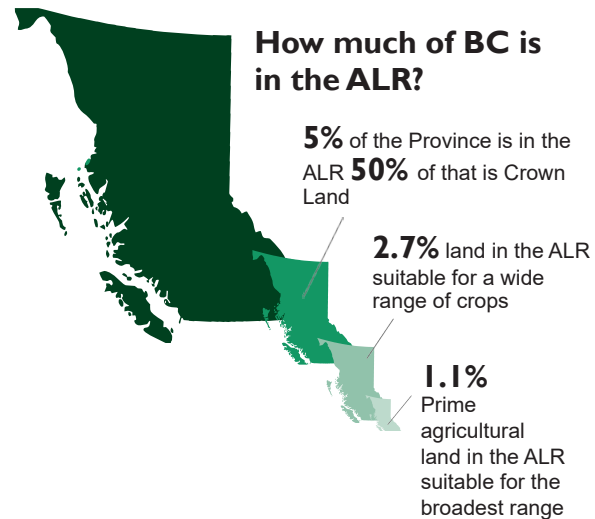
About the ALR

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial land use zone designated under the Agricultural Land Commission Act where agriculture is recognized as the priority use, non-agricultural uses are regulated and farming is encouraged.

Designation of the ALR

In 1972 a land freeze was put in place as a result of increasing losses of farmland (approximately 6000 acres per year). In 1973, the Land Commission Act was passed and an independent Land Commission was appointed to establish and administer the zone that was to be called the ALR. Under the 1973 Land Commission Act, the 28 Regional Districts in the Province were required to submit an “agricultural reserve plan” to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). To provide guidance to the Regional District’s, the Ministry of Agriculture also prepared suggested ALR maps that identified lands that had the soil and climate combination to support agriculture. Regional Districts then made their recommendations to the ALC and the maps were reviewed to ensure consistency across the province. In general, the following methodology was applied:

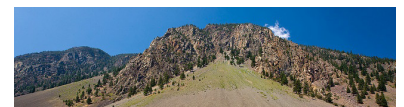
- All Class 1- 4 lands that were not already developed were included in the ALR, both Crown and private land;
- If non-agricultural land was not immediately available for urban expansion, enough land was excluded to allow for about 5 years of community growth to ensure local governments had a reasonable amount of time to re-direct future growth;
- Class 5 and 6 lands were included where historic land use patterns demonstrated that they could be used for agriculture in conjunction with prime capability lands, including spring and summer ranges in ranching areas; and then finally,
- Small pockets of Class 7 lands were included where exclusion might have allowed undesirable intrusion or incompatibles uses into agricultural areas.



Class 1 - 3 Prime Agricultural Land



Class 4 - 6 Secondary Agricultural Land



Class 7 Limited Agricultural Capability

Agricultural Options

Following the ALC’s review and subsequent amendments, the finalized plans were approved by Cabinet in 1976. The process of establishing the ALR took 1 ½ years.

ALR Notation on Title

In the 1970s, the ALC participated in a project with Land Title Office to add ALR notations advising that the property “may” be in the ALR. The process involved summer students and was of limited accuracy given that property titles had to be cross referenced with ALR maps that varied significantly in quality between Regional Districts. Over past 40 years ALC has been correcting inaccurately labeled titles when brought to ALC’s attention.

The Purpose of the ALC

- (1) The purposes of the ALC as set out in Section 6 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALC Act) are:
 - (a) to preserve agricultural land;
 - (b) to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and,
 - (c) to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies
- (2) The commission, to fulfill its purposes under subsection (1), must give priority to protecting and enhancing all of the following in exercising its powers and performing its duties under this Act:
 - (a) the size, integrity and continuity of the land base of the agricultural land reserve; and,
 - (b) the use of the agricultural land reserve for farm use.

The Commission

There are currently 14 Commissioners across 6 Administrative Regions (South Coast, Okanagan, Island, the Interior, Kootenays, and North) and one Chair. Of note, Bill 15, which was brought into force and effect last year, provided the ALC Chair the flexibility to create decision-making Regions that can better consider local and regional circumstances and make better use of the Commissioners, drawing on their expertise in a related technical field or land-use issue. It also allows for Commissioner members to serve on more than one Region if quorum of individual members' expertise warrants it.

What the Commission considers when making Decisions

Land Resource	Agriculture	Local Area Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural capability, suitability, and current land use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the proposal impact existing or future agriculture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional & community planning objectives; and Local Government, AAC recommendations.

see *What the Commission Considers for more*

Principal ALC Functions

Regional Planning: encourage local governments to enable and accommodate farm use in their plans, bylaws, policies.

Applications: review land use applications to determine consistency with ALC mandate.

Policy Development: create policy and information bulletins that clarify regulations and ALC decision making processes for local governments and landowners.

Compliance and Enforcement: ensure governing legislation is adhered to by responding to complaints.

Permitted Farm Uses in the ALR



Farm retail sales



Horse facilities



Agri-tourism activities



Cannabis Production



Construction farm buildings



Alcohol Production Facilities

*Local Governments can Regulate but not Prohibit

Application Types

One of the ALC's principal functions is to review applications. Applications allow proponents to approach the Commission to request permission for activities that are not permitted by the Regulations. There are seven different application types. In 2019-2020, the ALC received 378 Applications. The break down of these applications is provided below.

