



Key Request:

The City of Delta is following up on its previous conversations regarding the need to strengthen the capacity of the ALC to fulfill its enforcement role. Strengthening provincial enforcement capacity is critical to protecting farmland, deterring speculative or non-agricultural development, and upholding the integrity of the ALR framework. Without this, the current model remains inadequate, leaving local governments without the means to ensure proper land use, and communities increasingly frustrated by non-compliant activities that go unchecked.

Limited enforcement not only leads to the gradual loss of productive farmland but also contributes to the rise of inappropriate land uses, drives up farmland prices, and undermines public trust in the Province's commitment to protecting BC's agricultural future. Increased provincial support for ALC enforcement is an essential and overdue step to uphold the principles of the ALR and support the future of farming in BC.

Background:

The City of Delta is requesting the Province of British Columbia to increase funding to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in order to expand its compliance and enforcement capacity. This request is supported by a resolution submitted by Delta and unanimously endorsed by the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA)

that is advancing through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) resolution process for broader provincial consideration.

Local governments across BC, particularly those with significant land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), frequently observe, or receive public complaints regarding land use activities that appear inconsistent with ALC regulations. While municipalities like Delta are responsible for local zoning and bylaw enforcement, it is the Province, through the ALC, that holds exclusive jurisdiction over the ALR and the authority to enforce compliance with the ALC Act and ALR Land Use Regulation.

Despite this responsibility, we understand the ALC currently operates with only eight enforcement staff for the entire province. Six officers, one advisor, and one supervisor are tasked with overseeing approximately 4.6 million hectares of ALR land. Each enforcement officer is responsible for hundreds of files spanning multiple jurisdictions. These officers carry broad legal powers to intervene in cases of suspected contraventions, yet their reach is limited by the sheer scale of their mandate and the lack of resources to act swiftly and effectively.

Municipalities like Delta cooperate with ALC enforcement officers on joint investigations and share information through bylaw enforcement where possible. However, local governments do not possess the tools, expertise, or jurisdiction under the ALC Act to carry out proactive ALR enforcement. Delta's agricultural zoning regulations align with provincial legislation, and while our bylaw officers are actively involved in investigating concerns, the lack of sufficient ALC staffing significantly hampers timely and effective enforcement collaboration.