



ALR Boundary Review

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS ALR boundaries were established in the early 1970's, and no province-wide reviews have been conducted since that time in spite of technological progression and data maturity about the suitability of those boundaries;

AND WHEREAS it is well known, particularly in rural areas of the province, that large areas of the ALR are unviable for agriculture, and conversely, some areas of high agricultural value were left out in the initial rush to delineate protected agricultural areas in BC, negatively impacting British Columbian's confidence in the value and importance of the ALR.

THEREFORE be it resolved that NCLGA and UBCM encourage the Province to mandate, appropriately staff, and fund both the ALC and Regional Districts to conduct a comprehensive, collaborative, data-driven, expeditious, province-wide review of the ALR boundaries to ensure the highest quality agricultural lands are protected for the next 50 years, and that appropriate lands unsuitable for agriculture be identified in collaboration with Regional Districts and member municipalities to allow for 20 years of growth, in alignment with provincial housing and land use mandates for local governments.

Backgrounder:

The Agriculture Land Reserve's initial boundaries were established over a one-and-a-half year period in the early 1970's. The boundaries were based on the best available information from the Canada Land Inventory Mapping program and in collaboration between the Agricultural Land Commission and Regional Districts. The collaboration with regional districts allowed for the boundaries to allow for up to five years of population growth near population centres.

Concerns about the sustainability of agriculture highlight the ever-present need to protect lands with high agricultural value. It is well-known and established that the current boundaries exclude some areas of high agricultural value, while including large areas that are unviable for agricultural activity. The level of technological improvements, data quality, and regulatory changes also create an environment where a comprehensive boundary review would be beneficial to increasing trust levels in the integrity of the ALR.

Further, collaboration with regional districts will be critical to the success of any boundary review. This ensures that local knowledge can be incorporated with technical information to focus land use protections on land with high-agricultural value, while excluding or reducing protections for land that has no agricultural value. This lower-value land could then support other provincial objectives for housing and economic development. Adequate funding will be required for both the ALC and regional districts to engage in this work.