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**Sent:** March 23, 2026 11:19 AM

**Subject:** Important Message from the ALC Chair



## Important Message from the Chair

Monday, March 23, 2026 – Please circulate to Mayor & Council/Board & Board Chair, the Chief Administrative Officer or City Manager, and the Director of the Planning and Building Departments.

### ALC Staffing and Budget Pressures

This message is provided to advise local governments that the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) has had to make the difficult decision to reduce staffing levels in order to remain within budget.

This decision follows several years of increasing statutory responsibilities without corresponding, stable funding. In 2019, legislative changes significantly expanded the ALC's mandate, introducing new application, notification, and authorization requirements that the Commission is legally required to administer. Although additional funding was approved in principle at that time, it was later withdrawn, and leaving the ALC to deliver its expanded mandate within its existing budget.

Since that time, the ALC's operating budget has remained essentially flat in real terms, while operating costs and service demands have continued to rise. Over this period, the Commission has faced negotiated wage increases through collective agreements, inflationary pressures, and sustained growth across all functions of the Commission, including application volumes, compliance and enforcement activities, and associated legal costs.

The combined effect of increasing workload and a fixed operating budget has progressively eroded the Commission's ability to maintain staffing levels. While temporary Ministry support helped manage these pressures in prior years, the Commission was advised in January 2026 that it must operate strictly within its approved annual budget, which was confirmed in February to remain unchanged at \$5.5 million for the 2026/27 fiscal year.

Over the past year, the Commission implemented extensive cost-containment measures, including significant reductions to Commissioner expenses, staff travel, office supplies, and general project and meeting expenditures. Despite these efforts, salary and benefit costs now exceed available funding, leaving staffing reductions as the only remaining option to ensure fiscal compliance.

The ALC remains committed to protecting agricultural land and supporting farming in British Columbia. However, continued expansion of statutory responsibilities without commensurate funding directly affects service capacity, processing timelines, and organizational sustainability. While the Commission will continue to prioritize critical and time-sensitive matters wherever possible, some service impacts may be experienced.

Long-term service sustainability depends on stable funding that is aligned with the Commission's legislated mandate. The ALC will continue to work with government to seek funding arrangements that support effective service delivery, and we appreciate the understanding and cooperation of local governments during this period.

**Jennifer Dyson**

Chair

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission

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**Contact Us:**

For more information, please visit the ALC's website at <https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca>

If you want to speak to someone from the ALC please contact us at <https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/contact>