

January 16, 2026

Re: Local Government OCP/Zoning Bylaw Referral

The Agricultural Land Commission (the "ALC") has received a copy of your Official Community Plan and/or zoning bylaw referral. Due to the ALC's current workload, ALC staff are not able to provide a specific response. This letter provides general guidance.

A reminder that local governments are required under [s.46 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act](#) ("ALCA") to ensure their bylaws are consistent with ALCA, Agricultural Land Reserve ("ALR") regulations, and any orders of the Commission. Inconsistent bylaws include those which allow a use which is not permitted in the ALR or contemplate a use of land that would impair or impede the intent of the ALCA, such as prohibiting agriculture.

As outlined in the [ALC Bylaw Review Guide](#), it is recommended, among other things, that local governments designate and zone ALR land with one "Agricultural" designation/zone, permit agriculture and uses identified in Parts 2 and 3 of the [ALR Use Regulation](#) that may not be prohibited by a local government, and set a minimum lot size large enough to discourage subdivision of ALR land.

ALR land should not be designated for future development or for non-farm uses unless the use has been approved by a resolution of the Commission or meets criteria set out in [section 23 of the ALCA](#) for an exception.

For specific guidance related to housing, it is recommended that local governments refer to [Housing Legislation in the ALR Factsheet](#) that outlines the number and types of housing permitted in the ALR.

Additionally, it is recommended that local governments establish buffering and setbacks between agricultural and urban zones, as set out in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's [Guide to Edge Planning](#) and [Subdivision Near Agriculture Guide for Planners and Approving Officers](#), and consider exceptions for farm buildings and farm uses within DPAs.

We look forward to working with you on your next referral. If you have any specific questions in the meantime, please let me know (ALC.Referrals@gov.bc.ca).

Yours truly,



Liz Sarioglu, Director of Policy and Planning