

August 27, 2026

Hon. Lana Popham

Minister of Agriculture and Food

Victoria, BC

Via Email: AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Support for Proposed Regulatory Amendments to Expand Food Processing in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

Dear Minister Popham,

On behalf of the Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce and our 480+ member businesses across Mission and the broader Fraser Valley, we are writing to express our strong support for the Province of BC's [proposed regulatory changes to expand food processing on Agricultural Land Reserve \(ALR\) land](#).

Earlier this year, the BC Chamber network adopted [Eliminating the 50-50 Rule to Strengthen Food Security and Agrifood Processing in B.C.](#) The policy calls for a more flexible approach that supports food-processing investment, strengthens markets for BC farmers and maintains protections for agricultural land.

Food and beverage manufacturing represents strong growth potential in our region and recent years have highlighted the importance of resilient local food systems. Global supply chain disruptions, trade uncertainty, and rising costs have shown the need for BC to strengthen its ability to grow, process, and distribute food closer to home. However, historic regulatory barriers, specifically the rigid 50% on-farm ingredient requirement, have constrained value-added processing, forced raw agricultural products to be exported for processing, restricted farmer incomes, and driven capital investments to competing jurisdictions.

Enabling viable food processing in BC will help reduce reliance on external supply chains, keep more of the food value chain in the province, and improve food security for residents, businesses, and communities.

Earlier this year, the BC Chamber network passed a policy on removing the 50-50 rule. Your proposed balanced framework begins to address these challenges as identified by the BC Chamber network:

- **Unlocking Value-Added Economic Development:** Allowing food-processing facilities on lower-capability soils (Classes 5–7 and serviced Class 4) removes significant barriers to capital investment while preserving prime agricultural land (Classes 1–3) for active crop production.
- **Strengthening Regional Supply Chains & Food Security:** Encouraging BC-grown establishes a practical anchor for local farm off-take while enabling processors to achieve year-round viability.
- **Protecting Family Farms and Jobs:** Expanding processing on the ALR creates new, sustainable, high-skilled agricultural jobs and access to new markets while providing family farms with stable, local markets for their harvests.
- **Improving Regional Logistics:** Supporting regional food infrastructure, such as cold storage, can shorten travel, ease bottlenecks, reduce waste, and keep produce closer to where it is grown.

Advocacy, Benefits, Connections

In Mission and nearby rural communities, agriculture includes berry and field crop production, livestock operations, hay and forage land, equestrian and hobby farms, nurseries, farm-gate sales, and small-scale food and beverage businesses. These operations are part of Mission's economic base and rural identity, but they often need better access to nearby processing, cold storage, distribution, and value-added opportunities to stay competitive and keep more agricultural value in the region.

Mission's rural land base includes significant ALR areas in and around the valley, Stave and Nicomen Island areas, and the smaller rural communities east of the urban core. In places such as Deroche and Durieu, agriculture, floodplain management, transportation access, and rural servicing are closely connected. A flexible but carefully managed approach to food processing on suitable lower-capability ALR land could support farm viability while continuing to protect productive soils, drainage areas, and working farmland.

- A local farm or food business could use these changes to process more BC-grown products closer to where they are produced, add cold storage or packing capacity, diversify farm income, and create skilled rural jobs.
- For example, Mission berry, dairy, livestock, nursery, or farm-gate businesses could benefit from clearer rules allowing appropriate value-added processing without displacing productive farmland.
- In our region, it is important that high-quality farmland, grazing land, hay land, and floodplain agricultural areas remain protected.

These changes could help keep more food processing, investment and jobs in our region while supporting local farmers and protecting land that remains important for agricultural production.

These regulatory changes will expand food-processing opportunities on suitable lower-quality ALR land while protecting BC's prime quality farmland. They will also strengthen food security and supply chains, create new markets for farmers and producers, and support local investment and jobs. By allowing more food to be processed closer to where it is grown, we can help keep more economic activity within BC. Clearer approval processes will also provide greater certainty for businesses and local governments.

As the Ministry concludes its public engagement, we urge the Province to finalize and implement these regulatory changes swiftly to provide clarity and unlock the potential across BC's agrifood sector. Timely implementation will provide greater certainty for farmers, processors, investors, and local governments.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical economic and food security priority.

Sincerely,



Miriam Bozman, Chief Executive Officer
Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce

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cc: Hon. David Eby, Premier of British Columbia;

cc: MLA Reann Gasper

cc: MLA Lawrence Mok

cc: MLA Tony Luck