



GREATER VANCOUVER  
BOARD OF TRADE

Greater Vancouver Board of Trade  
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Bridgitte Anderson, ICD.D

2025-26  
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2025-26  
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August 18, 2026

The Hon. Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Sent via email: [AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

**RE: GVBOT Support for Proposed Changes to Enable Food Processing in the ALR**

Dear Minister Popham,

On behalf of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GVBOT) and our members, we are pleased to provide input on the province's proposal to expand food processing opportunities within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This proposal represents a necessary and long overdue consideration in how B.C. supports local production, agricultural growth, food security, and economic resilience.

The GVBOT welcomes the government's focus on unlocking greater local food processing capacity in B.C. and we are encouraged by the efforts to review ALR policies to support the food economy here at home. **We broadly support the direction set out in the proposal to establish a 5 percent minimum threshold for provincially grown or raised primary products used in food-processing facilities on eligible ALR land.**

B.C. stands at an important inflection point, and the need to act is urgent. Ongoing trade uncertainty with our largest trading partner, shifting global supply chains, rising costs, climate-related disruptions, and geopolitical instability underscore the urgent need to strengthen domestic production capacity and build a resilient provincial economy. At the same time, these challenges present an opportunity. As outlined in the province's *Look West* strategy, over the next decade, B.C. is poised to create new opportunities for agriculture, expand exports, diversify markets, and attract investment. Enabling more local food processing will help farmers, processors, and businesses build capacities and showcase high-quality B.C. products both in Canada and abroad. The spirit of this

proposal aligns well with the province's vision to increase agricultural exports by 25% over the next decade and supports Canada's broader trade diversification and food security objectives.

To seize that opportunity, we need policies that support investment and are responsive to changing market conditions. Food security depends on a strategic approach to agricultural land that supports the full agricultural value chain, from production to processing.

The current 50-50 rule requires food processors operating on ALR land to source at least half of their input from the same property. While well intentioned, this requirement can create barriers to investment and limit the ability of food processors to operate efficiently throughout the year, particularly when local crops are out of season. As identified in the GVBOT's report, [\*Building B.C.'s Economy: Fostering More Local Production\*](#), the rule restricts opportunities for value-added food processing and constrains the growth of a sector that plays a critical role in supporting farmers, strengthening supply chains, and enhancing food security.

Regulatory inflexibility stemming from this rule has also contributed to B.C. losing agri-food and food-processing investment opportunities to competing jurisdictions. [\*Economic analysis\*](#) found that more than five million square feet of industrial investment, some of which include food-processing activities, has been diverted from Metro Vancouver to Calgary due to limited industrial land supply and regulatory barriers. As a result, British Columbia has not only lost jobs and nearly \$500 million in annual GDP, but also missed opportunities to strengthen supply chain resilience and reduce transportation-related emissions by processing more goods closer to home.

The proposal, which provides greater flexibility for food-processing activities on specific soil classes and already serviced parcels, would unlock an estimated 500–1,000 hectares of opportunity for Made-in-B.C. products, supporting local production, retaining jobs and economic activity in the province, and strengthening the foundation for a resilient BuyBC ecosystem. [\*The GVBOT strongly supports the province's proposed regulatory changes\*](#) to allow greater flexibility for food-processing facilities on lower-capability ALR lands. We believe the proposal appropriately recognizes that food processing is a critical component of the agricultural value chain and that modern food systems require both production and processing capacity to succeed.

In particular, we see merit in the proposed framework that would allow food processing on lower-capability ALR lands (Class 5-7 soils and eligible class 4 lands) and already serviced parcels. This direction aligns with GVBOT's policy recommendation to modernize the 50-50 rule and create the flexibility needed for scalable, year-round agricultural processing, investment, and growth of B.C.'s value-added food sector, while continuing to preserve and protect quality farmland. It also reflects recommendations of the [\*2020 B.C. Food Security Task Force Report\*](#), which recognized the opportunity to modernize the ALR by permitting appropriate agricultural-industrial uses on lower-capability agricultural lands, including Class 5-7 soils. We believe the proposal appropriately acknowledges that the ALR comprises diverse land types with varying

agricultural capabilities and that some parcels may be better suited to supporting food processing activities than primary agricultural production.

This proposed change sends an important signal to processors and investors currently considering jurisdictions such as Alberta and Washington State, where land availability and development costs are often more favourable. B.C. has an opportunity to reverse the trend of processing capacity leaving the province and instead attract new investment, create jobs, strengthen local supply chains, and increase demand for B.C.-grown and B.C.-raised products.

As the ministry gathers input and considers next steps, we encourage the continuation of appropriate guardrails and monitoring to ensure access to eligible lands for both prime farming and food processing, prevent unwanted and uneconomic speculative activity from inflating land values, and support the long-term viability of farm and food-processing investments.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and look forward to continued engagement as you advance this important work to enable scalable, year-round agricultural processing, increase food security, and attract investment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bridgitte", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Bridgitte Anderson  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

CC:

The Hon. David Eby, Premier of British Columbia

The Hon. Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth