

GOVERNMENT'S LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS

BETWEEN

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA)

AND

THE CHAIR OF THE AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMISSION)

FOR 2016/17

PURPOSE

This Letter of Expectations (the Letter) provides Government's annual direction to the Public Service Organizations (PSO) and is an agreement on the parties' respective accountabilities, roles and responsibilities. The Letter confirms the Organization's mandate and priority actions, and forms the basis for the development of the Agricultural Land Commission's (ALC) service plan. It is intended to create dialogue between the parties and to support an open, positive and co-operative working relationship, resulting in the achievement of Government's policy and performance expectations in a transparent and accountable manner.

ALC ACCOUNTABILITIES - MANDATE

Government has reconfirmed the following purposes for the ALC under the 2014 *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act (ALCA)*:

- to preserve agricultural land;
- to encourage farming on agriculture land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
- to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

SPECIFIC ALC ACCOUNTABILITIES

To achieve this mandate, the ALC is directed to take the following strategic actions:

1. Develop a strategy, for discussion with and review by the Deputy Minister, to focus on improving services to taxpayers by ensuring that once applications are received by the ALC that they are processed efficiently and transparently and that decisions on applications are communicated to applicants in an efficient and timely manner.
2. Fully participate with the Deputy Minister through 2016/17 in implementing the action plan (Attachment 1) developed in accordance with the Taxpayers Accountability Principles (TAP) and initially presented to the ALC on August 7, 2014.
3. Develop a plan, for discussion with and review by the Deputy Minister, with specific deliverables and timelines outlining how the ALC will ensure that the ALC's compliance and enforcement, have well-defined internal guidelines, are easily accessible and fully transparent to the public, and have sufficient staff to be carried out effectively.
4. Recommend, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, a policy approach for government to consider how best to ensure that the ALC's decisions result in a no net loss to agriculture in British Columbia.

GENERAL ALC ACCOUNTABILITIES

British Columbians have come to expect high quality products and services delivered by their PSO. The Province is well served by the PSO and it is up to the Boards and Executive Committee members of these organizations to manage in the best interests of the Province and our citizens and conduct its affairs within the established set of principles established by Government last year. The intent of the Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP) is to strengthen accountability and promote cost control. These principles instill a common frame of reference to inform decisions and ensure that the actions taken and services provided meet public policy objectives established by government on behalf of the citizens of BC. All PSO are expected to understand the responsibility they have to the citizens of BC and how it is complementary to the fiduciary duty to their organizations.

One of government's core values is respect for the taxpayer's dollar. It is critical that PSO operate as efficiently as possible, in order to ensure British Columbians are provided with

effective services at the lowest cost possible. This requires constant focus on maintaining a cost-conscious and principled culture through the efficient delivery of services that stand the test of public scrutiny and help develop a prosperous economy in an environmentally sustainable manner. The foundation of this work is the government's commitment to controlling spending and balancing the budget.

To achieve this, the actions outlined in the TAP Transition Letter shared with the ALC on June 19, 2015 (Attachment 2), are to continue to be developed and implemented including the joint strategic engagement plan, the establishment of a reporting cycle, and the evaluation plan. For detailed information about TAP directives, please refer to the following link, [Taxpayer Accountability Principles](#).

In addition, it is expected that your organization will continue to be diligent in ensuring familiarity with and adherence to statutory obligations and policies that have broad application across the public sector. Please refer to the following link for a summary of these accountabilities, [PSO Accountability Summary](#).

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Government is committed to continuing to revitalize the relationship between government and PSO. This strong focus on increased two-way communication supports and ensures a common understanding of Government's expectations. Timely communication of any issues which may affect the business of the ALC and/or the interests of Government is critical to building trust and the effective delivery of public services, including information on any risks to achieving financial forecasts and performance targets.

Specific to the ALC, Government will:

- On a quarterly basis meet with the ALC to review progress on the ALC's specific accountabilities and provide direction to the ALC as required;
- Engage in two-way discussions regarding ALC's informational needs to discharge TAP obligations.

AREAS OF SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

On a quarterly basis, the Deputy Minister and the Chief Executive Officer of the ALC will meet to discuss relevant and current ALC business.

On a biannual basis, the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Chair of the ALC, and the Chief Executive Officer of the ALC, will meet to discuss relevant and current ALC business.

The meeting will be to review the achievement of the goals, objectives, performance indicators, financial targets and risk assessments identified in the ALC's Evaluation Plan (Attachment 3). It will also be to identify one collaborative opportunity per fiscal year for the ALC to better integrate activities/outcomes for taxpayers.

Establish on-going regular meetings between the Chief Executive Officer of the ALC and the Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

REVIEW AND REVISION OF THIS LETTER

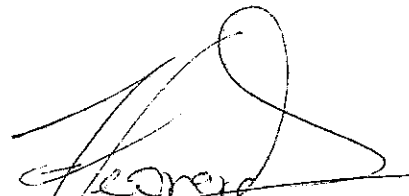
The Minister of Agriculture is accountable for undertaking reviews of this Letter and monitoring its implementation. Government and the ALC may agree to amend this Letter on a more frequent than annual basis.



Honourable Norm Letnick
Minister of Agriculture

March 3, 2016

Date



Frank Leonard
Chair, Agricultural Land Commission

March 3/2016.

Date

Attachments:

- 1. Action Plan
- 2. Transition Letter (June 19, 2015)
- 3. Evaluation Plan

TAXPAYER ACCOUNTABILITY PRINCIPLES ACTION PLAN		
ACTION	AGRI	ALC
1. Principles form the basis of a government strategic mandate orientation for all ministers, public sector board members, deputy ministers and CEOs. The orientation will promote understanding of the principles and will be the signed by the participants.	Primary Responsibility	Secondary Responsibility
2. Government will provide guidance to public sector entities on standards of conduct, from which public sector organizations will develop comprehensive codes of conduct that will apply throughout their organization.	Secondary Responsibility	Primary Responsibility
3. All public sector boards will receive new mandate letters from their minister responsible annually. All board members will sign the mandate letter and the letters will be posted publicly, enhancing their accountability to government's strategic mandate.	Primary Responsibility	Secondary Responsibility
4. An annual Chair/CEO report letter with respect to the organization's performance concerning the mandate letter expectations to be established as a new accountability requirement.	Secondary Responsibility	Primary Responsibility
5. Regular meetings will be required between ministers and board chairs, and deputy ministers and CEOs that focus on performance against the taxpayer accountability principles, results and strategic decision making.	Primary Responsibility	Secondary Responsibility
6. Ministries, in collaboration with the organization, will develop an evaluation plan with specific efficiency and performance measures as determinants of the organization's health and performance, against the taxpayer accountability principles, which could include annual feedback from government.	Primary Responsibility	Secondary Responsibility



Attachment 2

June 19, 2015

File: 0280-30

Ref: 182421

Frank Leonard, Chair
Agricultural Land Commission
133-4940 Canada Way
Burnaby BC V5G 4K6

Dear Mr. Leonard:

Re: Strategic Engagement Plan – Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP)

I am writing regarding development of a new Strategic Engagement Plan (Plan) that will advance government's expectations as articulated in the Taxpayer Accountability Principles (TAP). As you are aware, government has directed the Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) and the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) to collaboratively develop a new Plan, which will establish a more comprehensive and systematic engagement model capable of:

- improving bi-lateral communication and overall transparency;
- facilitating a shared understanding of expectations and priorities;
- clarifying specific accountabilities; and,
- fostering a cost-conscious, principled culture that considers the best interests of taxpayers and shareholders.

The attached draft Plan (Appendix 1) is provided as a resource to advance this important government deliverable and builds upon the following key engagement principles and mechanisms:

1. **Government's expectations and priorities:** Communication to ensure ALC is aligned with Government and AGRI's expectations and priorities, including fiscal responsibility.
 - Approach: A "no-surprises" approach to Executive communication.

.../2

2. **Strategic Issues:** Communication to discuss specific issues, priorities and activities.
 - Approach: Quarterly updates from ALC to AGRI on relevant program activities; two-way discussion regarding ALC's informational needs to discharge TAP obligations; identification of one collaborative opportunity per fiscal year for ALC to better integrate activities/outcomes for taxpayers; and establishment of regular Executive Director/DM contacts.
3. **Reporting:** Establishment of a systematic and rigorous reporting cycle between ALC and AGRI that will improve alignment and performance and ensure issues are identified early and dealt with as appropriate.
 - Approach: Quarterly agenda Standing Items on current and pending reporting requirements.

The proposed draft quarterly meeting agenda (see Appendix 2) focuses on performance against the Mandate Letter, Service Plan, Corporate Strategy and TAP, as well as strategic decision-making, and corresponds with AGRI and ALC's reporting cycles. Work on this plan was initiated by the Ministry in the summer of 2014. It is provided for your review with the expectation that it will be customized to accurately represent your organization. Once complete, this Engagement Plan will be managed by ALC.

I encourage you to review the attached draft Strategic Engagement Plan and meeting agenda with your team and welcome your feedback. I have had an opportunity to discuss this Engagement Plan and letter with your Executive Director and I will continue to work directly with the Executive Director to confirm the content of the Engagement Plan.

In addition to formal, structured communications required under TAP, the intention of this Plan is to also include flexibility for AGRI and ALC to identify other opportunities to collaborate for mutual benefit. I invite you to consider other engagement actions, for example strategic planning, where my involvement may be of benefit, and to bring those ideas forward. I look forward to our continued positive communication and engagement.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Derek Sturko
Deputy Minister

pc: Honourable Norm Letnick
Minister of Agriculture

Attachments

Appendix 1 - Proposed Draft Strategic Engagement Plan

Engagement Actions (May not be sequential)¹	
2015/16 1st Quarter	Quarterly meeting with Executive Director (ED) and DM (<i>June</i>)
	2015/16 Mandate Letter draft discussed
	Collaboration on Strategic Engagement Plan with DM and Chair through the ED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high-level direction in a meeting with the ED • Send a letter to the Chair to introduce the draft Strategic Engagement Plan and confirm high level direction with respect to the Taxpayer Accountability Principles
	Collaborative project progress discussion
2nd Quarter	Bi-annual meeting with Chair and Minister
	Quarterly meeting with ED and DM (<i>September</i>)
	2015/16 Mandate Letter published
	Discuss collaborative project(s)
	Collaboration on Strategic Engagement Plan with DM and Chair through the ED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify roles and responsibilities • Establish communications protocols • Confirm Strategic Engagement Plan
Discuss Evaluation Plan and confirm next steps	
3rd Quarter	Quarterly meeting with ED and DM (<i>December</i>)
	Discuss collaborative project(s)
	Discuss draft Evaluation Plan, revise and confirm final plan
4th Quarter	Bi-annual meeting with Chair and Minister
	Quarterly meeting with ED and DM (<i>late February/ March – after Budget Day</i>)
	Draft Service Plan
	2016/17 Mandate Letters finalized
	Discuss collaborative project(s) and review project status against the Evaluation Plan
2016/17 1st Quarter	Quarterly meeting with ED and DM (<i>June</i>)
	Annual Service Plan Report
	Chair/ED Report Letter
	2016/17 Mandate Letter published
	Service Plan finalized and published
	Strategic Engagement Plan reviewed for next fiscal
	Evaluation Plan reviewed for next fiscal
Collaborative project progress discussion and review project status against the Evaluation Plan	

¹ In addition to the actions noted here, bi-annual meetings with the Chair/ED/DM/Executive Council are to be scheduled by the Ministry of Finance.

Appendix 2 – Proposed Draft Standing Agenda

Draft Standing Agenda

Purpose of the meeting:

Implement the Taxpayer Accountability Principles requirement for an effective Strategic Engagement Plan between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC).

Proposed attendees:

1. Chair of ALC and the Minister of Agriculture (Bi-annual)
2. Executive Director of ALC and Deputy Minister of Agriculture (Quarterly)

Agenda Items:

1. Minutes ratification
2. Minister/Deputy Minister update on government priorities
3. Status Report:
 - Report out on Taxpayer Accountability Principles and Evaluation Plan, Mandate Letter commitments and Service Plan performance measures
4. New issues
5. Collaboration Initiatives
6. Next Steps – Pending Reporting/Deliverables
7. Other – as appropriate

Agricultural Land Commission
Evaluation Plan

Reporting Period: To March 31, 2017

B.C. Taxpayer Accountability Principles

	Principle	Goal	Actions	Evaluation
1	Cost Consciousness (Efficiency)	Management of costs to maintain and improve public service.	Development of a Method to Determine Cost-of-Service for: application intake, review, site visits, requests for additional information, decision and required notifications	Monitor progress in implementing methodology Monitor trends in cost-of-service.
2	Accountability	Decisions and actions align with AGRI and ALC's core values and government's strategic mandate.	Communications of strategic priorities and financial information are transparent to the public.	Report on actions through Service Plans and Annual Reports reviewed and approved by the ALC Chair and CEO and the AGRI Minister. Ensure reports are made available to the public at www.alc.gov.bc.ca and by request.
			Development of a plan for a Compliance and Enforcement System	Report on progress in completing Compliance and Enforcement System plan Report on progress in operationalizing the Compliance and Enforcement System.
3	Appropriate Compensation	Performance management and employee compensation are consistent with Taxpayer Accountability Principles.	Adhere to compensation guidelines.	Monitor changes in compensation.
4	Service	Deliver cost-efficient, effective, value-for-money public services and programs.	Create Notification Targets for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Completion • Additional Information • Decisions 	Report out on percentage of notifications provided within 5 business days for applications.

Attachment 3

			<p>Application Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Online Application Process • Development of Applicant Satisfaction Survey 	<p>Report on progress completing an Online Application Plan</p> <p>Report on progress operationalizing a Web-based application process.</p> <p>Report on progress completing a plan to conduct an Applicant Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>Report on results of Satisfaction Survey conducted.</p>
5	Respect	Engage in equitable, respectful and effective communications that ensure all parties are properly informed in a timely manner.	Annually, conduct a survey of local governments with ALR to identify challenges and opportunities.	<p>Whether first survey is completed on time</p> <p>Report annually on results of local government survey</p>
6	Integrity	Make decisions and take actions that are transparent, ethical and free from conflict of interest.	Decisions of ALC and senior management are fully transparent to the public.	Report on progress to establish a strong ethical code of conduct for all ALC employees and executives.