

 <p><b>Agricultural Land Commission Act</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Policy L-11 January 2016</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOMESITE SEVERANCE ON ALR LANDS</b></p>
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*This policy is intended to assist in the interpretation of the [Agricultural Land Commission Act, 2002](#), including amendments as of September 2014, (the “ALCA”) and BC Regulation 171/2002 ([Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation](#)), including amendments as of August 2016, (the “Regulation”). In case of ambiguity or inconsistency, the ALCA and Regulation will govern.*

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach to situations where property under application has been the principal residence of the applicant as owner-occupant since December 21, 1972 and the applicant wishes to dispose of the parcel but retain a homesite on the land.

A subdivision application under Section 21 (2) of the ALCA is required.

Persons making use of this homesite severance policy (the “Homesite Severance Policy”) must understand the following:

- a. there is no automatic right to a homesite severance;
- b. the Agricultural Land Commission (the “Commission”) shall be the final arbiter as to whether a particular homesite severance meets good land use criteria; (see #4 below)
- c. a prime concern of the Commission will always be to ensure that the “remainder” will constitute a suitable agricultural parcel. (see #5 below).

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following guidelines apply to homesite severance applications.

1. A once only severance may be permitted where the applicant submits documentary evidence that he or she has continuously owned and occupied the property as his or her principal place of residence since December 21, 1972.
2. Where an applicant for a homesite severance has had a previous subdivision application approved by the Commission resulting in the creation of a separate parcel, the Commission may deny any further subdivision under the Homesite Severance Policy.
3. An application for a homesite severance will be considered only where the applicant submits documentary evidence showing a legitimate intention to sell the remainder of the property upon the approval of the homesite severance application. (An interim agreement for sale, a prospective buyer’s written statement of intent to purchase, a real estate listing, or some other written evidence of a pending real estate transaction may be acceptable as documentation)

In considering the application, the Commission may make an approval subject to sale of the remainder within a specified period of time.

An order of the Commission authorizing the deposit of the subdivision plan will be issued to the Registrar of Land Titles only when a transfer of estate in fee simple or an agreement for sale is being registered concurrently.

4. There will be cases where the Commission considers that good land use criteria rule out any subdivision of the land because subdivision would compromise the agricultural integrity of the area, and the Commission will therefore exercise its discretion to refuse the homesite severance.

The following two options apply to a homesite severance:

- a. the existing homesite may be created as a separate parcel where it is of a minimum size compatible with the character of the property (plus a reasonable area, where required, for legal access purposes); or
  - b. where the location of the existing homesite is such that the creation of a parcel encompassing the homesite would, in the Commission's opinion, create potential difficulty for the agricultural operation or management of the remainder, the Commission may, if it deems appropriate, approve the creation of a homesite severance parcel elsewhere on the subject property.
5. The remainder of the subject property after severance of the homesite must be of a size and configuration that will, in the Commission's opinion, constitute a suitable agricultural parcel. Where, in the Commission's opinion, the remainder is of an unacceptable size or configuration from an agricultural perspective, there may be three options:
    - a. the Commission may deny the homesite severance;
    - b. the Commission may require that the remainder be consolidated with an adjacent parcel; or
    - c. the Commission may require the registration of a covenant against the title of the remainder and such a covenant may prohibit the construction of dwellings.
  6. A condition of every homesite severance approved by the Commission shall be an order stipulating that the homesite is not to be sold for five years except in the case of the death of the owner. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Order authorizing deposit of the subdivision plan, the owner shall file with the Commission a written undertaking or other legal documentation satisfactory to the Commission setting out this commitment.
  7. Where a homesite severance application has been approved by the Commission, local governments and approving officers are encouraged to handle the application in the same manner as an application under Section 514 of the [Local Government Act](#) insofar as compliance with local bylaws is concerned.

Unless defined in this policy, terms used herein will have the meanings given to them in the ALCA or the Regulation.

#### **RELATED POLICY:**

*ALC Policy L-17 Activities Designated Permitted Non-Farm Use in the ALR: Lease for a Retired Farmer – Zone 2*