

 <p><b>Agricultural Land Commission</b></p>	<p><b>STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION OF SOIL AND FILL USE APPLICATIONS FOR AGGREGATE EXTRACTION IN THE ALR</b></p>	<p><b>POLICY L-27</b></p> <p>Released June 2025</p>
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*This policy outlines general guidelines for the Commission’s consideration of proposals relating to aggregate extraction as part of an application for soil and fill uses within the BC Agricultural Land Reserve (“ALR”) made under s. 20.3 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act (“ALCA”).*

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**1.0 PRINCIPAL DECISION-MAKING CONSIDERATIONS**

The purposes of the Commission include preserving ALR land and encouraging farming within the ALR (ALCA, s. 6(1)). When considering proposed uses on ALR land, the ALCA states that the Commission must prioritize protecting and enhancing the size, continuity and integrity of the ALR and its use for farming (ALCA, s. 6 (2)).

As such, proposals to extract aggregate should demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commission that the impacted lands will be reclaimed to the same or better agricultural capability as their pre-disturbance conditions, in a reasonable timeframe, in accordance with [Policy P-13: Aggregate Extraction in the ALR – Reclamation Plans and Supporting Documentation](#) (“Policy P-13”).

The Commission is significantly more likely to approve applications where the applicant has demonstrated to the Commission's satisfaction all of the following:

- a) The proposed end land use for the extraction area demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining or improving the agricultural potential of the land.
- b) The aggregate extraction is completed in as short a timeline as practicably possible.
  - i. The Commission typically limits extraction approvals to ten years.
  - ii. Large operations often require more than one ALC application over the life of the project. Previous approvals do not compel the Commission to approve the continuation of extraction activities. The Commission may consider the applicant's adherence to any prior conditions of approval.
- c) The Commission prefers that extraction activities occur in clearly defined phases that limit the amount of ALR land being disturbed at any given time.
- d) There is a well-developed reclamation plan that meets the standards outlined in Policy P-13. For example:
  - i. The reclamation plan establishes baseline soils and agricultural capability of the lands under application and demonstrates how extraction areas will be systematically reclaimed to prioritize agricultural use within reasonable timeframes.
  - ii. The Commission generally prefers progressive reclamation (where reclamation is occurring concurrently with extraction).
  - iii. Where extraction is proposed on lands with active agricultural operations or on lands that are fallow but arable, restoring these areas back to agricultural production as soon as possible is prioritized.
  - iv. The final slope grades are suitable for agricultural operations and allow for farm equipment use, and integrate smoothly.
  - v. Reclamation methods are appropriate for agricultural end land uses, e.g., the Commission generally does not support "rough and loose" reclamation in the ALR, as this creates terrain that is hazardous for livestock and impractical for farm equipment.
- e) Proposed extraction operations will be consistent with the *Best Management Practices for Aggregate Extraction in the ALR* outlined in Policy P-13.

For more information on other factors the ALC may consider when deciding applications, please see the ["What the Commission Considers"](#) page on the ALC's website.

## 2.0 APPLICATION MATERIALS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

It is important that when originally submitted, the application contains the material (including the evidence and argument) the applicant wishes to be considered when the application is reviewed and adjudicated. The applicant may not have the opportunity to provide further information.

To evaluate the merits of applications proposing aggregate extraction in the ALR, the Commission relies on the evidence submitted in the application materials.

***Evidence that does not meet the criteria outlined below may not be considered or may not be given much weight in a decision of the Commission. Inconsistent or unclear evidence may also significantly increase application processing times and decrease the likelihood of approval.***

When reviewing the application materials, the Commission's expectations are as follows:

- a) Supporting documentation meets the standards outlined in Policy P-13.
- b) Supporting documentation is prepared by a QRP with appropriate skillsets (see [ALC Policy P-10: Criteria for Agricultural Capability Assessments](#) and [ALC Policy P-11: Expert Opinions in Agricultural Land Commission Matters](#)).
- c) The proposed aggregate extraction and reclamation activities are consistent across all application materials, including technical reports, site plans, cross sections, and operational details.
- d) In cases where a Notice of Work ("NoW") has been submitted to the Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals ("MMCM"), a copy of the NoW should be included with ALC application materials. The proposal outlined in the NoW should be consistent with the ALC application materials. MMCM authorization does not compel the Commission to approve aggregate extraction in the ALR.

### 3.0 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

On receiving an application for aggregate extraction, the Commission may refuse, approve, or approve an alternative use. If approved, the Commission will generally impose conditions, the costs of which applicants should factor in over the life of the project.

***Applicants should note that their compliance with any conditions previously imposed by the Commission will be taken into consideration if future ALC applications are made for a continued or new extraction use.***

Typical conditions of approval include:

- a) **Status Reports:** Status reports detailing extraction and reclamation progress may be required annually or based on extraction volume.
- b) **Closure Report:** A closure report prepared by a QRP to confirm fulfillment of all approval conditions, including reclamation, may be required.
- c) **Financial Security:** A financial security may be required to cover the cost of reclamation to an agricultural standard should the project be abandoned. The amount is determined by the scale and timeline of the extraction, with larger and longer projects requiring higher security due to the increased time, inflation, and area of land impacted. Applicants should be prepared for securities in the range of, but not limited to, \$10,000 to \$15,000/hectare.
- d) **Time Limit:** The Commission considers aggregate extraction to be a temporary use on ALR lands and typically limits approvals to 10 years. Successful applicants should be mindful of approval timelines and be prepared to submit new applications if necessary before decision expiration dates to ensure continuity of operations.

### 4.0 RELATED POLICY

[ALC Policy P-10: Criteria for Agricultural Capability Assessments](#)

[ALC Policy P-11: Expert Opinions in Agricultural Land Commission Matters](#)

[ALC Policy P-13: Aggregate Extraction in the ALR – Reclamation Plans and Supporting Documentation](#)

## 5.0 GLOSSARY

The following key definitions are relevant to this policy:

**“agricultural capability assessment”** means an assessment conducted as per the Land Capability Classification for Agriculture in BC (Kink, 1983) to determine, confirm, or reassess the agricultural capability classification rating of agricultural land

**“aggregate”** means sand, gravel, crushed stone, quarry rock and similar materials used in the construction and maintenance of civil and structural projects.

**“fill”** means any material brought onto ALR land other than materials exempted by the ALCA regulations.

**“placement of fill”** or **“fill placement”** means to deposit, place, store, or stockpile directly or indirectly, fill on any land in the ALR, where that fill did not previously exist.

**“Qualified Registered Professional”** or **“QRP”** means a person registered with a professional association including the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of BC, the Corporation of the Province of British Columbia Land Surveyors, and the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists.

**“remove”** or **“removal”** means the act of removing soil (including aggregate) from any land in the ALR, where it existed or stood, which place or location shall include a stockpile or other storage facility.

**“soil”** means the entire mantle of the unconsolidated material above bedrock other than minerals as defined in the [Mineral Tenure Act](#).

**“soil or fill use”** means the removal of soil from, or placement of fill on, ALR land, and does not include a farm use or residential use.

**“Soil or Fill Use Application”** means an application for permission made for the removal soil or placement of fill.

**“Stockpile”** means a human-made accumulation of soil, fill, or other organic materials held in reserve for future use, distribution, or removal.