

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRESS STATEMENT**  
**Stan Vander Waal, Chair B.C. Agriculture Council**  
**Re: Bill 24 Closure**

ABBOTSFORD – May 28, 2014

*The government's decision to invoke closure on Bill 24 is a disappointment, but it's not a surprise. Ideally, the proposed legislation would have been withdrawn so proper consultation with BC farmers, ranchers and agriculture stakeholders could take place.*

*In the best interest of agriculture and British Columbians, the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) prepared for multiple outcomes related to this legislation. Working together with the new Minister, BCAC's Board of Directors and the BCAC ALR Steering Committee successfully secured amendments to Bill 24 in an effort to reduce what BCAC originally deemed a threat to BC agriculture. It's important to note that the meat and potatoes of this legislation have yet to be developed. The regulations for Bill 24 will ultimately define the true intent of this legislation and its impact on agriculture. For this reason, I am pleased that BCAC has received a formal commitment from government to be actively engaged in the development of these regulations. In good faith, Minister Letnick has also committed to work with BCAC to explore governments' adoption of a net benefit to agriculture policy related to the ALR.*

*In regards to today's article published in the Global and Mail, we are again disappointed but not surprised. The cited comments towards Richard Bullock and the Agriculture Land Commission reflect a level of impatience and entitlement indicative of bullying. In effect, this article and these comments have reaffirmed BCAC's original suspicion about the initial intent of Bill 24. BCAC is committed to protecting the economic, environmental and social sustainability of agriculture in British Columbia. For this reason, we remain committed to working closely with our membership and with the new Agriculture Minister to ensure that the final intent of Amended Bill 24 serves in the best interest of agriculture.*

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The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) is the province's umbrella farm organization. We are a council of commodity groups and, through our members, represent approximately 14,000 of the 20,000 B.C. farm families who, in turn, generate 96 percent of the farm gate receipts in British Columbia. Agriculture is the third largest resource sector in the province, playing a significant and important role in the provincial economy both in terms of GDP and job creation.

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