



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget 2019 Continues to Grow a Sustainable Agriculture Sector

Vernon, B.C. (February 19, 2019) – B.C.'s agriculture sector is set to see another funding increase, as laid out in *Budget 2019*, announced today by Finance Minister Carole James. In accordance with the three-year budget plan, the Ministry of Agriculture's budget will increase by 5.4% as compared to 2018.

The funding allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture continues to focus on the revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), specifically by ensuring farmland is not contaminated by construction debris, toxic waste and other fill, and by curbing the construction of mega-mansions on farmland. There has been a slight increase to the Agricultural Land Commission's budget for enhanced enforcement related to the revitalization of the ALR as well as for work connected to the new cannabis regulation.

In further support of not only the agricultural sector but also the small business sector as a whole, the budget also revealed a small business corporate tax reduction from 2.5% to 2%.

"COABC continues to appreciate the strong support from the Ministry of Agriculture," says Jen Gamble, Executive Director of Operations for the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC). "We were pleased to see the budget emphasize the revitalization of the Agricultural Land Reserve and recognize the important role small businesses have in our province."

As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, given on February 12, 2019, the "government will be launching a food security task force aimed at bringing more farmland into production and growing new produce for markets here and abroad." This taskforce, though not a budget item this year, will further aim to create a sustainable agriculture sector by driving innovation, jobs and production.

About COABC

The Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC) is an umbrella association representing organic certifying agencies in BC. The organization aims to provide consumer confidence in the organic product certification, assist producers to increase market share, and support regional development of organic food production, processing and marketing. COABC strives to ensure high quality organic products are produced in sufficient quantity and in a manner that nurtures healthy soil, biological diversity and ecological harmony.

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