

New B.C. study shows strong public support for local farmland

95% of respondents say the Agricultural Land Reserve should be preserved for green space and growing food

SEPTEMBER 17, 2014, Vancouver, B.C. – A public opinion study released today by the [Real Estate Foundation of BC](#) and [Vancouver Foundation](#) found that four in five (82%) respondents believe farmland is a vital public asset, like forests and water.

Three-quarters (76%) of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the B.C. Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is important, not only for protecting farms, but also for protecting valleys and green space needed for wildlife habitat and recreational enjoyment.

Meanwhile, 71% of respondents believe that laws protecting the ALR should be strengthened or maintained.

The online poll of 1,704 British Columbia residents was conducted in July 2014 to assess public attitudes toward agriculture and food in the province.

The two foundations commissioned the study to inform discussion and decisions on the future of the ALR, a provincial land-use zone that protects farmland and land with potential to be farmed. The ALR currently makes up 5% of B.C.'s land base.

Among the survey's other findings:

- When asked what priority uses for land in British Columbia were, respondents identified "natural freshwater systems" (83%), closely followed by "farming and growing food" (81%).
- 80% of respondents are concerned about dependence on other countries for our food security.
- 73% of respondents say the ALR is a cornerstone of food security and the B.C. economy.

"Local, sustainable food systems are a priority issue for the Foundation because of the link between food security and community well-being," said Jack Wong, CEO of the Real Estate Foundation of BC. "With challenges such as development pressure on agricultural land and changing weather patterns, it is of vital importance to have forward-thinking policies that protect land for growing food, now and for future generations."

"This study demonstrates that British Columbians believe strongly in safeguarding our farms and green spaces to ensure long-term health, well-being and resilience in our communities,"

said Kevin McCort, CEO of Vancouver Foundation. “The Agricultural Land Reserve is a vital public asset contributing to our ability to reliably produce fresh food, preserve local farmland and freshwater supplies, and to support local B.C. farmers and ranchers.”

Both foundations have a province-wide mandate and support projects that promote strong, resilient communities and natural environments.

The poll was conducted by Vancouver-based McAllister Opinion Research. The survey is accurate to within +/- 2.36%, 19 times out of 20.

[Link to full survey results.](#)

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About the Real Estate Foundation of BC:

The Real Estate Foundation of BC is a philanthropic organization that helps advance sustainable land use in British Columbia. It provides grants to non-profit organizations working to improve B.C. communities and natural environments through responsible and informed land use, conservation and real estate practices. Its funding programs support research, education, and law and policy reform. Since 1988, the Foundation has approved more than \$67 million in grants. Learn more at www.refbc.com.

About Vancouver Foundation:

With over 1,600 funds and assets totaling \$930 million, Vancouver Foundation is Canada’s largest community foundation. Each year, Vancouver Foundation and its donors make more than 5,300 grants, totaling approximately \$50 million to registered charities across Canada. Since it was founded in 1943, Vancouver Foundation, in partnership with its donors, has distributed more than \$1 billion to thousands of community projects and programs. Grant recipients range from social services to medical research groups, to organizations devoted to arts and culture, the environment, education, children and families, disability supports for employment, youth issues and animal welfare. To find out more about Vancouver Foundation, please visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca.

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