

B.C. Land Use Planning for Agriculture

Local Government Elected Officials Presentation
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District – December 11, 2024



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Food

Today's Presentation

- Why Agriculture?
- Pressure on B.C.'s Farmland (6 big points)
- Tools in the Toolbox
- Key Messages
- Key Actions
- Discussion/Questions

Why Agriculture?

- Significant contributor to BC's economy and the sector is growing.
 - *BC Farm Cash Receipts increased from \$4.03B in 2020 to \$4.56B in 2022.*
 - *Oil & gas sector in 2020 = \$4.02B*
- Agriculture supports B.C. jobs and family businesses.
 - *In 2023, 40,000 people were employed in primary agriculture across BC.*
- Food security is more important than ever.
 - *The UN reports that the global food crisis is only getting worse.*



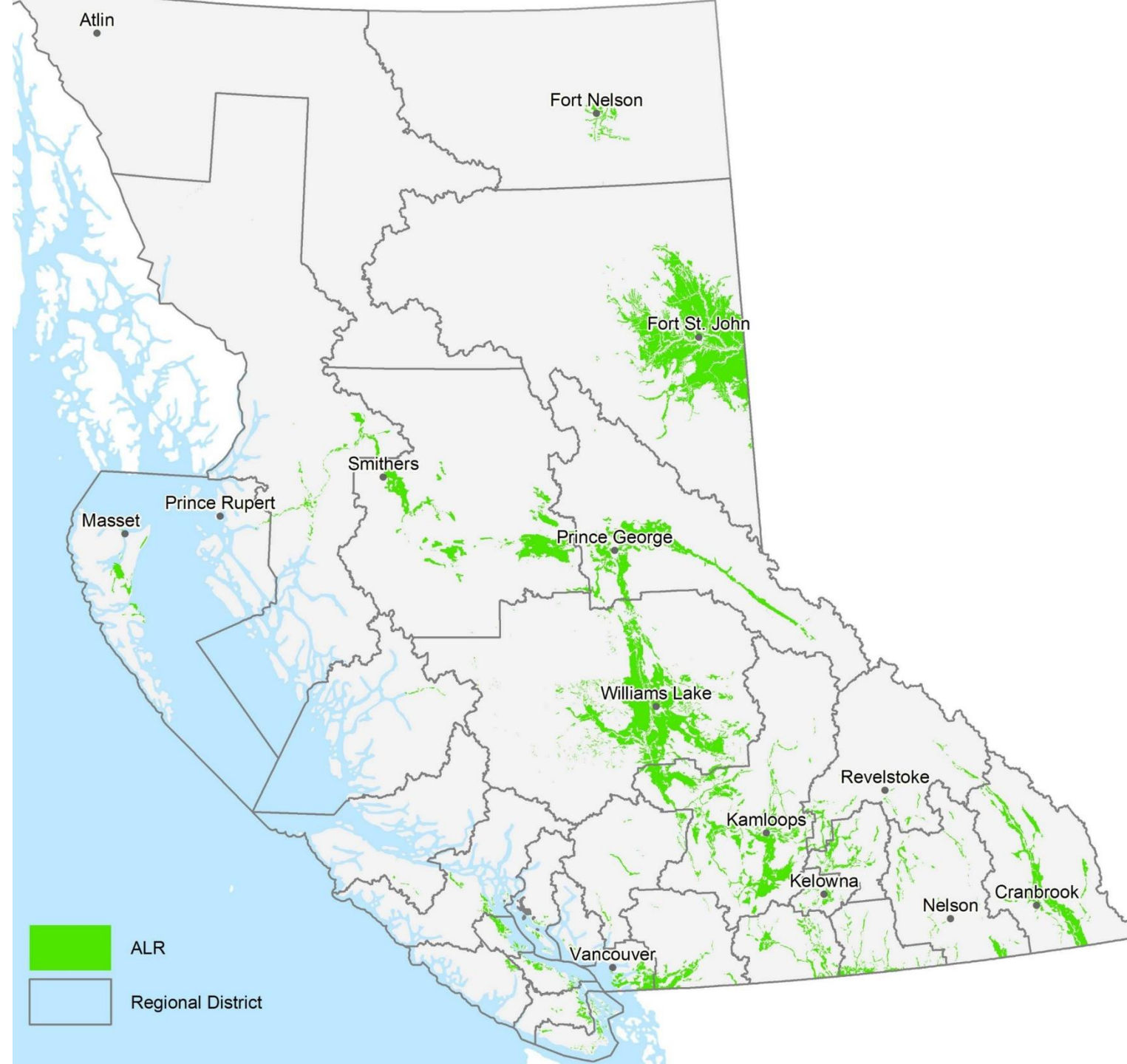


Pressures on the ALR and Farming

- Agricultural land in B.C. is very limited and under great pressure.
- Six key pressures facing the ALR and farming industry include:
 - Limited ALR land base;
 - Cost of ALR land;
 - Urbanization;
 - Housing;
 - Demographics; and
 - Lack of industrial land.

Pressure 1: Limited ALR Land Base

- The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
 - ~5 percent of B.C.'s land base;
 - ~7 percent of ALR not available for farming;
 - ~54 percent Crown Land.
- Some non-ALR farmland but does not have same regulatory protections.



An aerial photograph showing a vibrant yellow field on the left, a dark road with a dense line of green trees in the center, and a green field on the right. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the layout of the land and the shadows cast by the trees.

Pressure 2: Cost of Agricultural Land

- Cost of farmland in B.C. continues to rise;
- Increased by 8.0% in 2022 (18.1% increase in 2021 and an 8.0% increase in 2020);
- Agricultural land values in B.C. are the highest in Canada;
 - South Coast = \$139,000/acre;
 - Ontario ranges from \$4k – \$28k per acre;
- Vancouver Island = \$63,000/acre
- Increased demand and limited supply.



Pressure 3: Urbanization

- B.C.'s population is growing;
- 3 areas are significant “high-growth” regions:
 - Lower Mainland
 - Okanagan
 - Southern Vancouver Island
- This is also where 80% of B.C.'s total Farm Receipts are generated.



Pressure 4: Housing Demands

- Everyone knows...high prices that keep going higher;
- Both to purchase a home and rentals;
- B.C. = most unaffordable province for housing;
- Not just a Lower Mainland problem anymore;
- More people looking at ALR to solve housing crisis.



Pressure 4: Housing Demands

- It's called the Agricultural Land RESERVE;
- ALR is not the solution to B.C.'s housing crisis;
- ALR is not the solution to local government planning on housing;
- More people living the ALR = more headaches
 - Increased traffic/people driving farther distances;
 - People unfamiliar with farming = more complaints;
 - More strain on infrastructure.

Pressure 5: Demographics

- Average age of farmers in Canada keeps increasing:
 - 1996 = 48.4 (B.C. = 49.8)
 - 2006 = 52.0 (B.C. = 53.6)
 - 2021 = 56.0 (B.C. = 57.8)
- Fewer young people in B.C. getting into farming:
 - 2011 = 2,400 under 35
 - 2021 = 1,210 under 35
- BC = highest proportion of female farmers in Canada



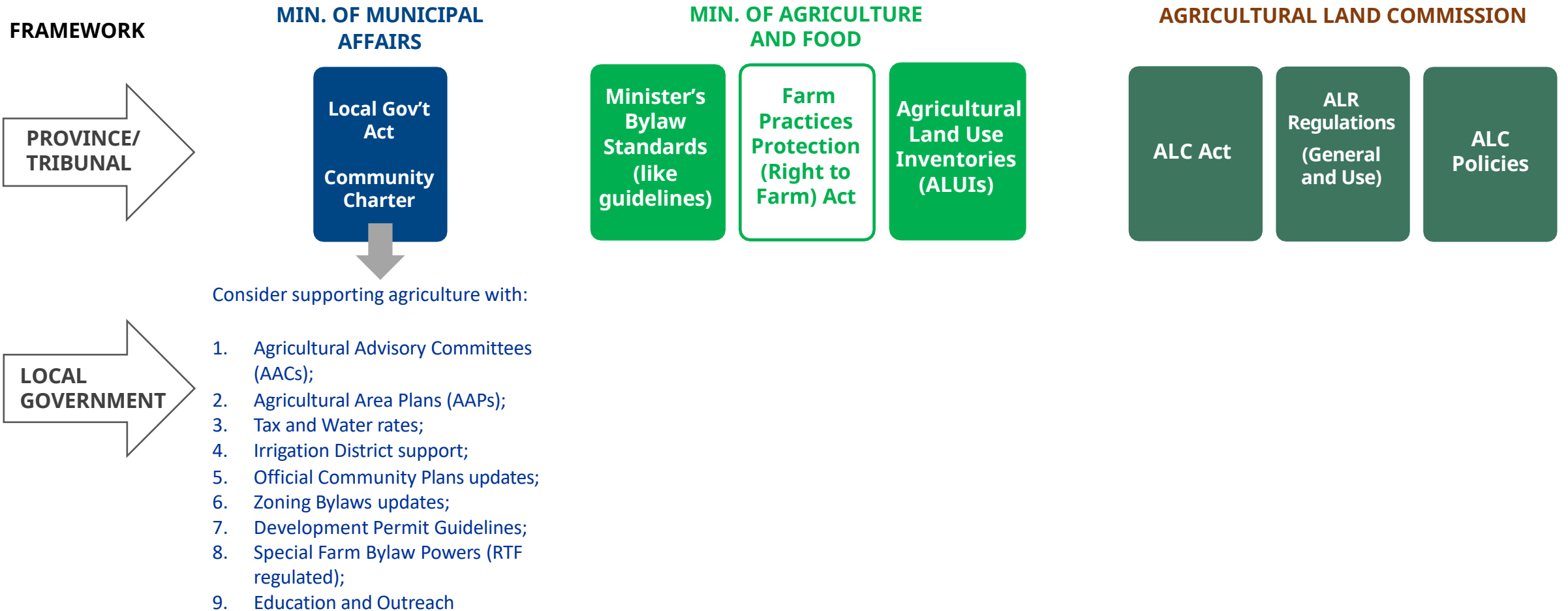
A construction worker wearing an orange hard hat and a high-visibility yellow vest is seen from the back, looking towards a large industrial building under construction. The building is surrounded by scaffolding and has a prominent arched structure. The scene is set outdoors under a clear blue sky.

Pressure 6: Lack of Industrial Land

- Critical shortage of industrial land;
- Redeveloping industrial land to other uses
- Industrial lands offer opportunities for middle income jobs.
- Lack of industrial land puts enormous pressure on ALR to accommodate these uses.

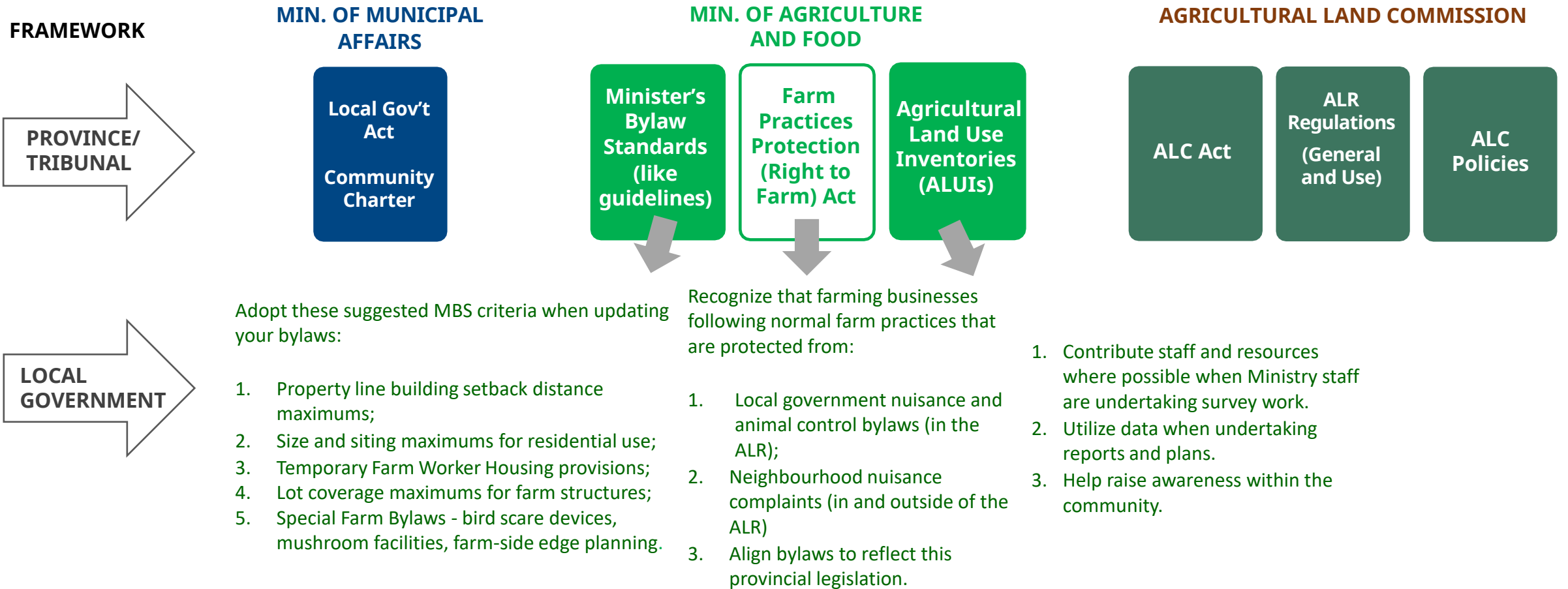
Tools in the Toolbox

How local governments can help B.C. agriculture through land use planning



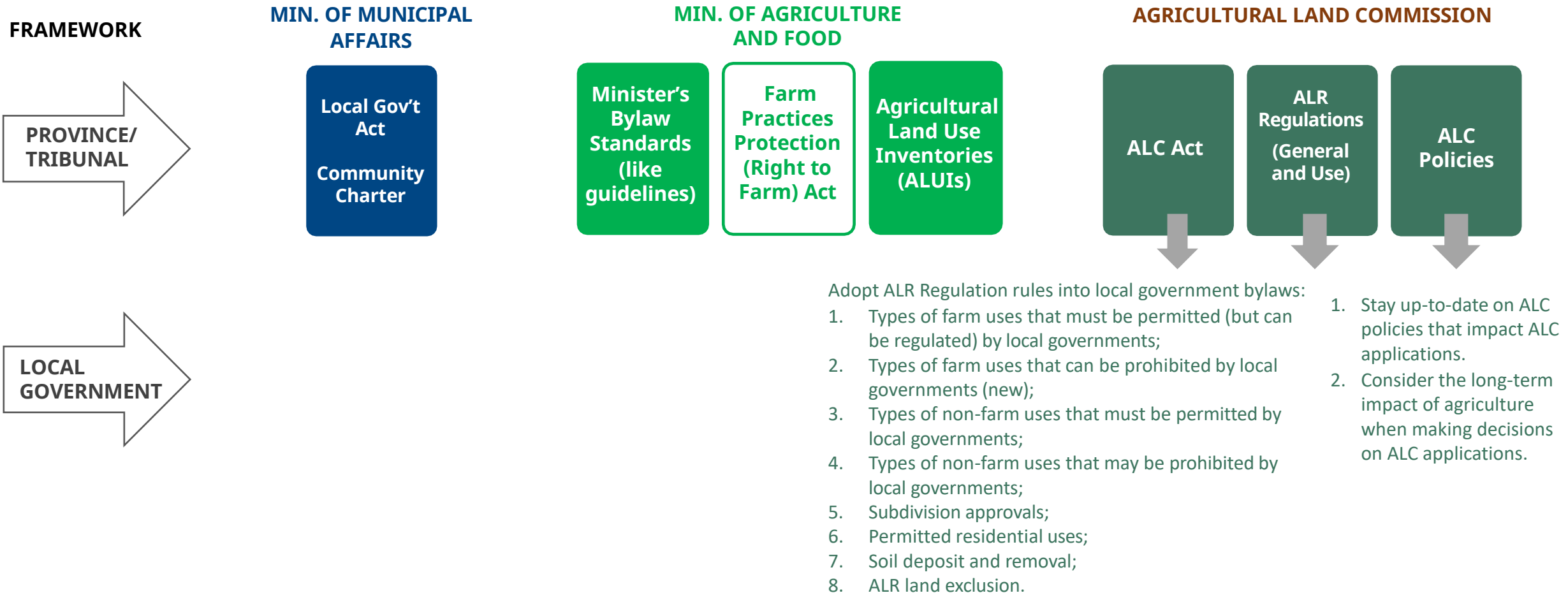
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Tools in the Toolbox

How local governments can help B.C. agriculture through land use planning





Key Messages

- **Competing demands** for limited agricultural land are growing;
- **Challenges** for farmers are increasing;
- **Food security** requires an available land base;
- **Protecting** this provincial asset requires a provincial – and local government – effort;
- **Local government elected officials** make a difference to support farmland, farmers and B.C.'s agricultural sectors.



Key Actions

- **Help B.C. farmers** succeed by reducing their burdens within your control;
- **Help create stronger buffers** between farmland and other uses. Good fences really do make good neighbours;
- **Coordinate** with your local governments neighbours to enact bylaws impacting agriculture that are consistent, fair and easy to understand;
- **Recognize** non-farm uses are having a cumulative affect on the ALR.

Questions?

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