



## Media Release

For Immediate Release

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### **District of Summerland organizes provincial forum with minister of agriculture**

VICTORIA – For the second straight year, the District of Summerland is organizing a meeting of mayors and councillors from municipalities in British Columbia with more than 20% of their land base in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to discuss issues of mutual concern.

The discussion will be held Thursday, September 25 at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) annual convention and will include the participation of Lana Popham, the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

More than 50 mayors and councillors from 20 municipalities have registered to attend.

Topics up for discussion include local governments' ability to adequately support widely dispersed infrastructure with their relatively small tax bases, the cost of farm land and struggle for young people to get into farming, ensuring food is being produced on farm land, a review of the threshold for achieving farm status, the burden on municipalities to enforce violations on ALR land, and whether the Ministry of Agriculture has sufficient clout within the provincial government.

Summerland Mayor Doug Holmes said, "Last year, it was agreed we would make greater headway on most issues by working together. Minister Popham also sees the value in working with local government, and we're pleased she accepted our invitation to participate in this year's forum."

He added, "All attendees at the forum come from communities with deep agricultural roots, and we are proud of our farming traditions, but as incorporated municipalities, we face significant growth and other pressures on our farmland that present challenges for supporting the integrity of the ALR and ensuring food is being produced on farmland."

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