



September 23, 2025

CLIFF#147707

Via email: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca

Leonard Hiebert
Chair
Peace River Regional District
Box 810, 1981 Alaska Ave.
Dawson Creek BC V1G 4HB

Dear Leonard Hiebert:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 20, 2025, addressed to Premier Eby, Minister Dix and Minister Popham, expressing concerns about impacts of the *Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act* (REPA) on agricultural land in British Columbia (BC). I am pleased to respond on Minister Dix's behalf.

REPA responds to BC's growing demand for clean energy and the ongoing uncertainty arising from trade tensions with the United States (US). The intent of REPA is to speed up approval processes for key electrical transmission lines and renewable energy generation projects while continuing to ensure robust protection of environmental, agricultural, and other values. REPA seeks to achieve these goals by consolidating decision-making authority over certain projects within the BC Energy Regulator (BCER).

I would like to emphasize that the Province remains committed to protecting BC's agricultural land and ensuring food security for British Columbians in the long-term. The Province's view is that REPA strikes the right balance between this commitment and other government priorities.

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As part of the shift to a one-window model, REPA allows the BCER to authorize renewable energy projects on the Agricultural Land Reserve. The BCER has been making decisions about whether to approve non-farm use for oil and gas projects since 2004 pursuant to delegation agreements between the Agricultural Land Commission and the BCER. Similarly to REPA, the delegation agreements were intended to support a more efficient one-window model for regulating the oil and gas sector while continuing to protect agricultural lands.

Due to these existing agreements, the BCER already has relevant qualified professionals on staff, including agrologists, and has developed expertise and capacity in this area. For example, in exercising its delegated authorities:

- the BCER has acquired experience evaluating area assessments, reclamation plans and recommendations for soil conversion and surface water management; and
- the BCER's inspectors are required to have knowledge of appropriate reclamation practices on agricultural land.

The BCER will apply this experience and capacity when making decisions about renewable energy projects proposed on agricultural lands. The BCER is also required to consider all relevant information and will continue consulting impacted stakeholders (such as local governments) on these decisions.

The BCER will have various tools under the new regulatory framework to prevent and mitigate negative impacts to agricultural lands, including the power to impose limits or conditions on an authorization to use agricultural land. The BCER has published intention statements about how it intends to use available tools to regulate renewable energy projects such as wind and solar (available here: <https://www.bc-er.ca/files/documents/Regulatory-Update/Renewables-Framework-Initial-Engagement-Policy-Intention.pdf>).

In relation to agricultural lands, the BCER intends to require proponents to minimize and restore impacts to agricultural capability of the land during site selection, design and decommissioning of a wind or solar facility. The BCER also intends that, for all renewable energy projects:

- proponents would be required to take operational and financial responsibility for site restoration, and
- restoration would be considered early and conducted throughout the life of the project where possible, with final restoration returning the land to its pre-activity state.

The BCER intends to develop regulations that would require the proponent to consult with local governments and submit a detailed consultation report, which must be considered by the BCER along with any written submissions from interested parties.

I would also emphasize the following points discussed in the meeting between Ministry staff, the BCER and the Peace River Regional District on July 30, 2025:

- REPA does not allow land to be removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve and does not give the BCER any authorities to make or change regulations regarding the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- REPA does not allow proponents to build transmission lines or renewable energy projects on private land without the agreement of the landowner.

The Ministry and BCER are currently engaging stakeholders on how wind and solar projects will be integrated into the new regulatory framework under REPA.

The intent is to ensure that impacted parties, including regional districts, have a meaningful opportunity to engage with project proponents before the BCER makes permitting decisions.

This fall, the BCER will engage further with the Peace River Regional District on the development of the BCER's technical regulations and operational policies for renewable energy projects. The BCER will also be engaging with the Agricultural Land Commission.

If you would like to meet with the Ministry or have Ministry staff attend meetings between the BCER and the Peace River Regional District, please let my office know.

Sincerely,



Viva Wolf
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions

pc: Honourable David Eby, Premier
Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions
Eric Kristianson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Food
April Wynne-Chesniak, Executive Director, BC Energy Regulator
Carmen Willms, Legislative Services Clerk, Peace River Regional District



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

August 20, 2025

File: 400.20.05

The Honourable David Eby, Premier
Office of the Premier
Premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions
Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions
ECS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Food
Ministry of Agriculture and Food
AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Via email

Dear Premier Eby, Minister Dix and Minister Popham,

Re: Agricultural Land Commission Letter re: the Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act

At the Regional Board meeting held on August 14, 2025, the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) Board discussed a letter from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) dated July 15, 2025 addressed to Premier Eby and Minister Dix which expressed deep concern and disapproval of the Government's passage of the Bill 14 Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act without any oversight from the ALC. The PRRD Board stands in support and solidarity with the views expressed by the ALC and would like to emphasize the importance of consultations with agricultural subject matter experts when authorizing energy projects on private farmland. As a result, the Regional Board subsequently passed the following resolution at the meeting:

*MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,
That the Regional Board send a letter to Premier Eby, Minister Dix, Minister Popham, and copy the North and South Peace MLAs in support of the Agricultural Land Commission letter regarding Bill 14 Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act.*

Given that the majority of the Agricultural Land Reserve lies within the PRRD, we support the ALC in their request for reconsideration of the legislation.

Sincerely,

Leonard Hiebert

Leonard Hiebert
Chair

cc. Jennifer Dyson, Chair of the Agricultural Land Commission ALCBurnaby@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca
MLA Jordan Kealy, Peace River North Jordan.Kealy.mla@leg.bc.ca
MLA Larry Neufeld, Peace River South Larry.Neufeld.mla@leg.bc.ca

diverse. vast. abundant.