Dear Harry Crosby:

Thank you for your email on June 8, 2020, addressed to myself and to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, regarding agri-tech land use and the use of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As the Minister of Agriculture, I am pleased to respond on his behalf.

Food security is vital to our economy and the wellbeing of all British Columbians. Our government is working hard to ensure we have a safe and resilient local food system now and for generations to come. The Food Security Task Force (FSTF) report, delivered earlier this year, provided strategic advice and recommendations for how technology and innovation can be developed, grown and broadly adopted to strengthen B.C.’s agriculture sector and food security across the province.

The Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry) is studying how the recommendations can fit within our government’s core values of promoting farming and protecting farmland. I want to assure you that there has been no decision to convert farm land to non-farm use or change the mandate of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

As an initial step in the review of the FSTF report, the Ministry has established an Agri-tech Land Use Secretariat. The purpose of the Secretariat is to review recommendation 4 and engage with stakeholders in order to develop options for government that will increase opportunities for agri-tech sector growth, in concert with other ongoing activities and initiatives of the Ministry.

This work will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Ministry and the ALC to ensure it complements the on-going revitalization efforts and encourages the production of food as the primary use of agricultural land. In undertaking the review of the report, the Secretariat welcomes information from interested individuals, organizations and stakeholders.
Thank you for writing and sharing your concerns with me.

Sincerely,

Lana Popham
Minister

cc: Honourable John Horgan
    Premier
    Wes Shoemaker
    Agri-Tech Land Use Secretariat