BCAC
BC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL
Leading the Way Together

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May 27, 2026

The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
Office of the Premier
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOV
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Sent Via Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Re: Access to Capital for BC Farmers and Ranchers — A Call to Convene

Dear Premier Eby,

On behalf of BC Agriculture Council and its members, I am writing to follow up on our ongoing work with the Province to address the capital access challenges facing British Columbia's farmers and ranchers. We first raised this issue formally in 2023, and we were encouraged to see it reflected in the recommendations of the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy, which called explicitly on government to identify and address gaps in capital access and to assess the potential for a provincial loan or loan guarantee program.

We are now asking for a concrete next step: a dedicated process to define the problem together — and to start designing solutions built for BC's unique circumstances.

The Problem Has Not Gone Away

When we first raised this issue in 2023, the cost of inputs — fuel, fertilizer, feed, and crop protection — had spiked to historic levels. While those pressures are not as severe as they were then, the underlying structural challenges persist. Operating costs remain high. Access to affordable short-term credit is limited, particularly outside major centres where agricultural lenders are few. The federal Advance Payments Program (APP), while valuable, is not sufficient on its own to bridge the capital gap that many BC producers face in financing their planting, production, and marketing cycles.

Compounding these pressures is the reality that BC has the highest average farmland values in Canada — a distinction that is both an asset for established producers and a significant barrier to new entrants and the next generation of farmers. When land is priced out of reach of farming income, younger producers cannot build equity, cannot access the collateral that conventional lenders require, and cannot absorb the kind of operating debt that high input costs demand. The result, as we are already seeing, is a generation of skilled and committed young farmers who want to farm in BC but cannot find a viable path to doing so. This is not only an agricultural problem — it is a food security problem and an economic development problem for rural communities across the province.

Other Provinces Have Found Ways Forward

BC is not alone in facing these challenges, but competing jurisdictions have developed tools to address them. Across Canada, provincial governments have created a range of complementary mechanisms to supplement federal programs like the APP, including commodity loan guarantee programs, agricultural loan programs administered by provincial ministries, and dedicated provincial crown corporations with agricultural lending mandates.

Alberta's Agricultural Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), Manitoba's Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC), and Ontario's Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) are examples of purpose-built provincial institutions that help farmers access operating credit, manage input costs, and finance farm transitions, including supports specifically targeted at young and beginning producers. These models are not identical, and no single model should be imported wholesale into BC. But they demonstrate clearly that provincial governments can play a meaningful and effective role in the agricultural credit landscape without simply handing money to banks.

We raise these examples not to prescribe a particular solution, but to illustrate the range of possibilities available to BC. Whether the right tool for this province is a loan guarantee program, a direct lending facility, a crown corporation with an agricultural mandate, or some combination of existing institutions and new authorities — these are exactly the questions that need to be worked through collaboratively with industry, lenders, and government. What we know is that doing nothing is no longer a viable option.

What We Are Asking For

We are not asking the Province to commit today to a specific program model. We are asking for a structured, time-limited process to do the hard work of getting to one. Specifically, we request that your government:

1. Commit to convening a working group on agricultural capital access, to include producers, ranchers, lenders, and ministry representatives, with a mandate to document the capital access gaps BC farmers currently face, review models from other jurisdictions, and bring forward a set of options for government consideration by a defined deadline.
2. Ensure the working group's mandate includes both the immediate challenge of operating credit for current producers, and the longer-term question of what financial tools and institutional supports are needed to build a farming sector that the next generation can actually enter and sustain.
3. Engage BCAC, its members, and the broader B.C. agricultural sector as partners in this process from the outset, not as consultees after the fact.

The Premier's Task Force built real momentum and goodwill between industry and government, and it produced a clear signal that access to capital is a priority concern. We want to build on that momentum and help deliver on the Task Force's recommendations. BC farmers and ranchers are ready to roll up their sleeves and work through the hard details, but we need the Province to also participate in that deeper discussion.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this request directly with you and Minister Popham at your earliest convenience. Please do not hesitate to contact me at dsynotte@bcac.ca or 604-854-4454.

Yours sincerely,

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cc: The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Food