

Received DC Office February 5, 2019

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February 5, 2019

Brad Sperling, Chair
and Directors
Peace River Regional District
Email: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca

Dear Chair Sperling and Directors:

Thank you for your letters of November 9 and December 20, 2018, addressed to the Honourable John Horgan, Premier, regarding Southern Mountain Caribou protection. I am also in receipt of correspondence sent by Peace River Regional District Communications Manager, Fran Haughian, on November 23, 2018. As Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond and I apologize for the lengthy delay in doing so.

Thank you for joining us at the meeting in Prince George. Our government is committed to advancing caribou recovery, while seeking to provide for the best interests of British Columbians. To help this iconic species recover, we need a collaborative approach that works for everyone. As we move forward with caribou recovery, BC will be looking at the impacts of all land uses.

Seventeen petitions have been filed under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), challenging the federal and provincial efforts to recover Southern Mountain Caribou. The federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada must recommend an Emergency Order (under Section 80 of SARA) based on recent findings of imminent threat to Southern Mountain Caribou. Such an order has the potential to immediately curtail forestry and mining activities in caribou critical habitat. The economic consequences of such an order are perilous.

To minimize the impact of such an order, BC and the federal government have been developing a Bilateral Conservation Agreement under Section 11 of SARA. This Section 11 Agreement applies to the 21 caribou local population units of Southern Mountain Caribou in BC. This agreement will be closely aligned with BC's own Provincial Caribou Recovery Program and include commitments to herd plans, habitat protection, restorative projects, predator management, monitoring, science and research, as well as ensuring that economic and job interests of communities are addressed. The draft Section 11 Agreement will be shared for comment prior to finalization this spring.

BC and the federal government, in partnership with the West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations, have also been negotiating a Caribou Recovery Partnership Agreement, which will apply to the three local population units of the Central group of Southern Mountain Caribou.

Focused engagement on the draft Partnership Agreement will take place with communities, Indigenous nations and stakeholders in February. As part of the engagement, the Province has committed to sharing data and analyses on potential impacts of the Partnership Agreement, and

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to working with the Peace River Regional District on evaluating the impacts of this agreement on Peace communities. There will be opportunities to review and update the proposed measures for the area that touches your community. The Partnership Agreement will not be finalized until engagement is complete and potential impacts on communities and workers are understood. Our government understands that outdoor recreation is an important part of the lives of many British Columbians and full closures of all snowmobile trails and access to the backcountry is not being considered.

In addition, BC plans to initiate a comprehensive planning process early this year as part of the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program that will provide local communities, stakeholders, and Indigenous nations with an opportunity to be involved in determining caribou recovery measures over the long term and protecting community well-being.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and for sharing your concerns. BC Government staff look forward to continuing to engage with you.

Sincerely,

George Heyman
Minister

cc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance
Honourable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture
Mark Zacharias, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Fran Haughian, Communications Manager, Peace River Regional District

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PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

December 20, 2018

Sent via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable John Horgan
 Premier of British Columbia
 PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
 Victoria, BC
 V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan:

RE: Message from Sauteau First Nations on Caribou Recovery

The nature in which ministerial negotiations have occurred to date between the provincial government and First Nations communities have caused a division throughout northern communities.

On December 11th 2018, Sauteau First Nations issued a statement on caribou recovery which publicly addressed rumours regarding their role in caribou recovery, and the steps that the federal and provincial governments were taking towards a caribou recovery plan. The Sauteau First Nations have been subject to negativity and criticism due to their participation in discussions with the senior levels of government regarding this initiative.

The level of emotion this topic evokes in people of the Peace Region speaks to its importance. The Peace River Regional District has repeatedly asked the Province to act in a transparent, open and collaborative manner, as demonstrated by Sauteau First Nations.

As the Peace River Regional Board values its ongoing relationships with First Nations communities, the Regional Board strongly advises that all levels of government demonstrate transparency, openness and collaboration in the caribou recovery process immediately.

Sincerely,

Chair Sperling
 Peace River Regional Board

c. Honourable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources,
EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

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PLEASE REPLY TO:

☒ Box 810, 1981 Alaska Ave, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8 Tel: (250) 784-3200 or (800) 670-7773 Fax: (250) 784-3201 Email: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca
☐ 9505 100 St, Fort St. John, BC V1J 4N4 Tel: (250) 785-8084 Fax: (250) 785-1129 Email: prrd.fsj@prrd.bc.ca

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Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy,
ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and
 Rural Development, FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation,
IRR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trades, and Technology,
JTT.Ministers@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,
MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Claire Trevena, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure,
Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Dave Nikolejsin, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources,
Dave.Nikolejsin@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Mark Zacharias, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy,
Mark.Zacharias@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Lori Wanamaker, Ministry of Finance, Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister John Allan, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations &
 Rural Development, John.Allan@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Doug Caul, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation,
Doug.Caul@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Fazil Mihlar, Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology, Fazil.Mihlar@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Jacquie Dawes, Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing,
Jacquie.Dawes@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Sandra Carroll, Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture,
Sandra.Carroll@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Grant Main, Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure,
DeputyMinister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

Mike Bernier, MLA, Peace River South, mike.bernier.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dan Davies, MLA, Peace River North, dan.davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

November 9, 2018

Email: Premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable John Horgan
 Premier of British Columbia
 PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
 Victoria, BC
 V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan:

As Mayors and Chairs of local governments and regional districts in the interior of British Columbia, we are writing to you to express our concern about the current process underway between the BC government and the federal government to achieve a Section 11 Conservation Agreement for caribou protection and the lack of consultation with communities in this process.

We find it disappointing to learn that plans are underway that will have a significant impact on the socioeconomic components of our communities and region. Many of our communities have attempted to engage with the Provincial Government throughout 2018 to “get a seat at the table” and to understand the plans to deal with the Southern Mountain Caribou.

Our understanding is that there are negotiations underway between the BC Ministry of Environment and certain Treaty 8 First Nations to create new caribou habitat protection area that could cover a significant portion of land for the south peace area. The result of these negotiations could have potential long lasting impacts to the economic conditions and way of life for our communities. I must point out that the loss of 500 jobs is much more impactful in a small community like Chetwynd BC, with a population of under 3,000 people than a similar job loss in an urban centre.

We feel it is imperative that the Provincial Government engage us and involve us in the discussion taking place as it relates to the impacts of resource development in the North and Interior. Our communities, our livelihoods and our families have a lot at stake. Our communities need to be involved in the decisions that are being made as they may have severe impacts on our forestry, energy, mining, and tourism sectors. In addition, those sectors support a large number of secondary or indirect jobs in our communities.

We are united in urging the Premier and the Provincial Ministers involved in the Caribou file to arrange for an immediate meeting with all of the Northern and Interior Mayors and Regional District Chairs. We are committed to working **with** First Nations so that we can all understand what is being considered.

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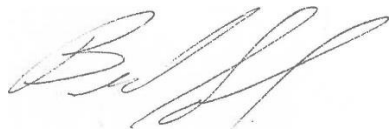
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☐ 9505 100 St, Fort St. John, BC V1J 4N4 Tel: (250) 785-8081 Fax: (250) 785-1119 Email: prrd.fsj@prrd.bc.ca

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Members of the Peace River Regional District Board met with Minister Donaldson this summer, and again during the Union of BC Municipalities Convention. Minister Donaldson, in his letter dated July 30, 2018, following a delegation to Victoria by PRRD representatives, committed to keeping an open, honest, and robust dialogue with our Mayors and Directors. To date, we do not feel well informed, and have not been asked for input. We have requested copies of recovery plans so that we could review them and formulate responses, to no avail.

Premier Horgan, and members of your government, the Peace River Regional District considers caribou protection and recovery as a key issue facing our region, and we are willing to meet with you at short notice to discuss caribou recovery plans.

Sincerely,



Chair Sperling

On behalf of the Peace River Regional District Board

cc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, pm@pm.gc.ca
Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca
Honourable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Carole James, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier, FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, IRR.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trades, and Technology, JTT.Ministers@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Honourable Claire Trevena, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

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cc: (continued)

Deputy Minister Dave Nikolejsin, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources,

Dave.Nikolejsin@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Mark Zacharias, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy,

Mark.Zacharias@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Lori Wanamaker, Ministry of Finance, Lori.Wanamaker@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister John Allan, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations &

Rural Development, John.Allan@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Doug Caul, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation,

Doug.Caul@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Fazil Mihar, Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology, Fazil.Mihlar@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Jacquie Dawes, Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing,

Jacquie.Dawes@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Sandra Carroll, Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture,

Sandra.Carroll@gov.bc.ca

Deputy Minister Grant Main, Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure,

DeputyMinister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

Bob Zimmer, MP for Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, bob.zimmer@parl.gc.ca

Mike Bernier, MLA, Peace River South, mike.bernier.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dan Davies, MLA, Peace River North, dan.davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca



For Immediate Release

Southern Mountain Caribou Engagement Demanded Immediately

November 23, 2018, Peace River Regional District - It has come to the attention of the Peace River Regional District that the Province and area First Nations are very close to signing an AIP (Agreement In Principal) on the creation of a large area dedicated to the protection of the Caribou. The purpose of the area is said to be in response to the Federal Government concerns about Southern Mountain Caribou Recovery in the Burnt Pine Herd. Sources tell us that this may include loss of access by industry and the general public to a large area of approximately 420,000 acres or 650 sq. miles located from Chetwynd to Mt Lemoray North and South. This could result in significant loss of annual cut in the forestry industry.

In May of 2018 Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Catherine McKenna, declared that a few Southern Mountain Caribou herds face "imminent threats to their recovery". The Province of BC has committed to protect and restore caribou habitat; the Peace River Regional District is supportive of these efforts but know that the stakeholders who are directly affected have not been included in planning and that all initiatives must be a result of science and evidence-based analysis.

The PRRD and area residents have been promised stakeholder engagement in this process but it has not happened. There is concern that similar plans are in the works for the Quintette and Narraway herds in the Tumbler Ridge area and other herds throughout BC.

The Provincial Government does not have a mandate to continue to make deals that will devastate communities and the way of life in the PRRD without involving the residents and industrial partners in our region.

The Peace River Regional District demands that the province and the federal government suspend any further discussion on these issues until a comprehensive impact analysis is completed on all socioeconomic impacts of any changes to land use in our communities. This analysis must be done throughout the entire PRRD to accurately measure any and all effects on our communities and way of life.

Immediate and constructive engagement is demanded now before a deal is made.

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Media Contact

Fran Haughian
250-784-3200
Fran.haughian@prrd.bc.ca

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☒ Box 810, 1981 Alaska Ave, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8 Tel: (250) 784-3200 or (800) 670-7773 Fax: (250) 784-3201 Email: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca
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