



ALBERTA
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

*Office of the Minister
Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
MLA, Lethbridge-West*

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Hon. Minister McKenna, Hon. Minister Carr and Parliamentary Secretary Wilkinson,

As you know, Alberta released its Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan on December 19, 2017. Since the release of the draft plan, The Government of Alberta has hosted public open houses in Whitecourt, Edmonton, Cold Lake, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie and High Level. We have also held numerous stakeholder meetings attended by industry, municipalities, environmental non-governmental organizations and First Nations. The public meetings were attended by thousands of Albertans who are concerned about the impact caribou range plans will have on their communities and on the industries that support those communities.

We take these concerns very seriously and have heard loud and clear from Albertans that more work and time is needed to understand the socio-economic impacts of caribou range planning on northern communities.

Alberta views caribou recovery as a shared responsibility between federal and provincial governments. In order to meet the federal government's targets and our shared goal of putting woodland caribou populations and habitat on a positive trajectory towards recovery, Alberta

believes that the federal government needs to play greater role in supporting Alberta to understand the true impact of caribou range plans in Albertan communities.

Albertans deserve a plan that protects their jobs and the economy. The investment required to fulfill the federal requirements is enormous and cannot be shouldered alone by the Government of Alberta, and by extension, all Albertans.

The province has already invested \$9.2 million to date on caribou recovery but we know the cost of restoration alone over the next 40 years is estimated to be over \$1 billion, and that rearing facilities in our protection plan will cost in the neighbourhood of \$75 million. Caribou recovery cannot occur without an infusion of federal funds to restore habitat necessary to ensure population growth.

At this stage in the caribou range planning process Alberta is suspending consideration of conservation lands recommended in the Caribou Task Force Report pending further review and the outcome of the socio-economic impact study. Further to this, Alberta will redouble its efforts to work with industry to develop solutions that avoid the imposition of an Environmental Protection Order being imposed on Alberta by Ottawa. A meeting with industry representatives will happen in the coming weeks.

We have many willing Alberta participants in Caribou recovery actions. They include the oil and gas industry, the forestry sector, environmental groups, municipalities and small business. They all need more time to get this strategy right and fully conclusive.

Alberta understands the pressure the Federal Government is under with respect to the federal Species at Risk Act and the need to take action on Caribou recovery. We also know you understand the economic imperative across the country and in particular in northern Alberta. While we need more time and partnership from the federal government on this matter, we also need your support in not prematurely implementing federal protection orders that will not have effective outcomes for Canadians and Albertans.

Alberta's economy is recovering from the largest economic downturn in the history of the province. Alberta strongly believes that now is not the time to impede that recovery by implementing policies before the economic impacts are understood by government and all Albertans.

Albertans appreciate and understand the value of maintaining caribou on the landscape but remain deeply concerned about potential job losses and impacts to local economies resulting from caribou range planning. Alberta's approach to protecting caribou populations and fulfilling the requirements under federal law cannot and will not come at the expense of our economy. Our commitment is to ensuring these communities continue to grow and prosper into the future.

We believe it is essential that the political leadership in Ottawa has an opportunity to hear firsthand from Albertans regarding their concerns. Over the coming days we will assemble a delegation of representatives from northern Alberta to go to Ottawa to make Alberta's case with regard to the challenges, concerns and opportunities present in Alberta's range planning

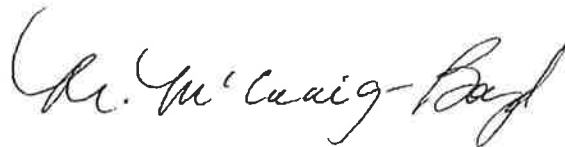
process. We will also be sending a delegation of officials to Ottawa to begin to work together on a plan to analyze and mitigate the costs of this enormous undertaking to fulfill federal law.

We look forward to further discussions about how the federal government can partner with Alberta and industry to develop the right solutions that protect our wildlife and our economy.

Sincerely,



The Hon. Shannon Phillips
Minister of Environment and Parks and the
Minister Responsible for the Climate Change
Office



The Hon. Margaret McCuaig-Boyd
Minister of Energy



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