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April 25, 2018

The Honourable Minister McKenna  
Minister for Environment and Climate Change Canada  
200 Sacre-Coeur Boulevard  
Gatineau, QC, K1A 0H3

**RE: In Support of Alberta Government's Recent Letter Requesting Federal Financial Support for Woodland Boreal Caribou Recovery and Reaffirming Northwest Species at Risk Committee's Position**

Dear Minister McKenna:

Northwest Species at Risk Committee (NWSAR), were very pleased to see the letter sent by the Alberta government to Minister Carr, Parliamentary Secretary Jonathan Wilkinson and yourself. Seeking federal financial assistance to assist caribou habitat restoration costs, as well as the suspension of some aspects of Alberta's caribou range planning, most notably the candidate conservation areas.

As you are aware, Alberta's draft Provincial Caribou Range Plan (2017) proposed establishing multiple large conservation areas, measuring approximately 1.6 million hectares, in Northwest Alberta; without the province or the impacted stakeholders even knowing what the socio-economic impacts are likely to be, or whether the new conservation areas would even help the caribou to recover.

NWSAR supports Alberta's decision to further understand the socio-economic impacts of their draft Caribou Range Plan, prior to the implementation of any new permanent land-use designation alterations and/or stringent land-use regulations.

As we mentioned in our previous letter, dated March 12<sup>th</sup> 2018, we believe there are alternative methods which can effectively improve local caribou populations



over the shorter and longer terms. In essence, a local collaborative approach which includes, but not limited to: strategic predator management; sustainably-increased alternate-prey species management; integrated land and access management for industry and development; immediate strategic restoration of critical habitat; pilot research projects for caribou range biophysical inventories and lichen transplants. Collectively these objectives can work together to halt continuing declines of local caribou populations, promote a trajectory towards successful caribou recovery, safeguarding local jobs, and securing a variety of stakeholder interests and values.

NWSAR and a multitude of other stakeholders are certain that large conservation areas and federal emergency protection orders will not recover the caribou. The caribou require local land users to instill strategic, proactive land management tools and processes, some of which can be phased out over time when no longer required. Partnerships can be formalized and actions can be held accountable under several Parliamentary Acts; collaboration with stakeholders at the grassroots level is the key to success for woodland caribou.

The federal and provincial governments need to facilitate this. At present, the 2018 federal Action Plan for Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population states that only jurisdictions (other parties, as appropriate) can enter into section 11 conservation agreements under the Species at Risk Act, with the federal government. Opportunities to meaningfully expedite the trajectory towards successful recovery of woodland caribou with “range-level” stakeholders are being missed here.

I shall be accompanying the Government of Alberta during their woodland caribou delegation to Ottawa early next month, representing NWSAR, Town of High Level and supporting the people of Northwest Alberta. I look forward to these discussions with you and your ministry; most notably exploring meaningful, pragmatic solutions for caribou recovery in Alberta.

Please do not hesitate to contact me prior to this delegation for more information.

Sincerely,



Crystal McAteer  
Vice Chair, NWSAR Committee  
Mayor, Town of High Level



cc: Honourable Jim Carr, Minister Natural Resources Canada  
Jonathan Wilkinson, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Environment  
and Climate Change Canada  
Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister Alberta Environment and Parks  
Debbie Jabbour, MLA – Peace River  
Arnold Viersen, MP – Peace River-Westlock  
Chris Warkentin, MP – Grande Prairie-Mackenzie  
Northwest Species at Risk Committee

