

Minister
of Natural Resources



Ministre
des Ressources naturelles

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E4

DEC 07 2018

Ms. Margo A. Wagner
Chair
Cariboo Regional District
Suite D, 180 North Third Avenue
Williams Lake, British Columbia V2G 2A4

Dear Ms. Wagner:

Thank you for your correspondence of November 14, 2018, about caribou habitat protection in British Columbia. I understand your concerns and the pressures your communities are already facing from the mountain pine beetle and wildfires. Natural Resources Canada is committed to conducting science and generating knowledge and tools to support the management of these disturbances in Western Canada.

As you are aware, provinces and territories have primary responsibility for the management of lands, natural resources and wildlife, including caribou. In 2012, the Government of Canada released a Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Boreal population (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), developed in consultation with provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments, which called upon provinces and territories to develop range plans to demonstrate how they would protect the threatened species' critical habitat within their jurisdictions. The development and publication of the Recovery Strategy was a requirement of the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The Government of Canada is now working with provinces and territories to advance these plans as well as other conservation measures.

Evidence-based decision-making is at the core of our government's approach to policy development. Under the Nature Legacy initiative, Natural Resources Canada recently received funding to conduct research on how climate change is altering caribou habitat and how best to restore habitat. We will work closely with Environment and Climate Change Canada and other partners on this research. Our objective is to support caribou recovery and environmental resilience while protecting the well-being of communities.

Cariboo Regional District

File No. 400-40

DEC 14 2018

Referred To ~~Chair~~ / Board

Canada

We are also working with Environment and Climate Change Canada to ensure that any potential federal actions related to caribou take into account socio-economic impacts. The federal government is working with the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta to share information, expertise and best practices, and to inform federal socio-economic analysis, regarding southern mountain caribou. My department will continue to leverage our partnerships and industry expertise to support Environment and Climate Change Canada's analyses and advance species recovery, while maintaining the multiple benefits of the natural resources sector. Our collective actions to support caribou must maximize recovery and minimize socio-economic impacts.

I encourage you to contact Beth MacNeil, Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Forest Service, to share the perspectives of your communities and to inform future analysis. She can be reached by email at beth.macneil2@canada.ca. I noticed that you also sent your correspondence to my colleague, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I have included her in my response, as Environment and Climate Change Canada can best address your concerns regarding the need to engage local governments on caribou recovery.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,



Amarjeet Sohi, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change



OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

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File: 400-01

November 14, 2018

VIA EMAIL

The Honourable John Horgan
Premier, Province of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

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

The Honourable George Heyman
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The Honourable Scott Fraser
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
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The Honourable Catherine McKenna, MP
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, MP
Minister of Natural Resources
Amarjeet.Sohi@parl.gc.ca

Dear Honourable Premier and Ministers:

Re: Caribou Habitat Protection in British Columbia

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Cariboo Regional District (CRD), to express my dismay and concern over the discussions that are ongoing between the Federal, Provincial and First Nations Governments regarding the Section 11 Species at Risk legislation.

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building communities together

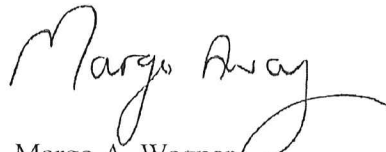
We at the CRD are dismayed and outraged that local Governments have been totally left out of these conversations, despite the fact that we are hearing from both the Provincial and Federal Governments that there will be significant economic impacts to our communities. These impacts will be felt in the initial loss of the estimated 400,000 cubic metres of timber from the creation of the 110,000 hectare critical habitat area and the potential loss of 500 related jobs to the forestry industry, plus the highly probable loss of one mill.

Spin off economic impacts include those to tourism, trapping & guide outfitting, and back country use with either ATV or snowmobiles, to name a few. All of these activities are an integral part of our survival, as our lumber industry is constantly under pressure from either a variety of beetle infestations or wildfires. Your decision will come on the heels of two of the most devastating wildfire seasons on record, which saw well over 2 million hectares of forest burned in central and northwestern BC. The fires caused an economic downturn that will take us years to recover from fully, if ever.

None of us in local Government are opposed to saving the caribou herds that grace our area; all we are asking for is a seat at the table, so that we can be part of the solution rather than being the last level of Government to be apprised of a plan. I implore you to offer local Governments a seat at the discussion table, so that you can hear, firsthand, from those that will be impacted the most, and know the land and the challenges that the caribou face in order to flourish. Many Regional District Chairs and Mayors of Central and Northern Communities are willing to travel to Victoria to facilitate a meeting; we just need the opportunity to be part of the discussion.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,



Margo A. Wagner
Chair

c: Todd Doherty, MP, Cariboo-Prince George
Donna Barnett, MLA, Cariboo-Chilcotin
Coralee Oakes, MLA, Cariboo North

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