

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau P.C., M.P.  
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The Honourable John Horgan M.L.A.  
Premier of British Columbia  
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April 8, 2019

**Re: Species at Risk – Local Government Petition for Action (British Columbia Caribou Recovery Program)**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Horgan,

Elected officials of member municipalities and regional districts throughout the North Central Local Government Association's (NCLGA) operating area (covering 70% of B.C.'s landmass) are very concerned with the environmental, social and economic well-being of their communities in the context of changing economies and the changing environment (e.g. wildfires, forest health outbreaks).

As communities strive to adapt and create new visions for their future, they are hampered by Federal and Provincial decision making that does not include them but that profoundly affects them. Of immediate concern are the processes and strategies to address species at risk, such as those developed under the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program. This represents an ongoing area of concern due to the potential significant environmental, social and economic impacts to our member communities. Thus, the NCLGA would like to petition the Federal and Provincial governments to immediately implement the following three (3) priority actions when addressing species at risk:

1. ***Bring local governments to the table in a meaningful way*** – All four orders of Canadian government must play a role in the development of the processes and plans in order to implement innovative and collaborative solutions for species at risk that reflect the communities directly and disproportionately impacted.
2. ***Collaboratively review, amend and release the timelines*** – For example, under the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program the current six-week (March 21<sup>st</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>) feedback period for the Draft Section 11 Agreement (Canada and B.C.) and the Draft Partnership Agreement (Canada, B.C., West Moberly and Sauteau First Nation) is not adequate given the significant levels of concern, unique framework of the government-to-government agreements, and complexity of the potential solutions and impacts associated with the problem at hand. Once Local governments are brought to the table in a more meaningful way (Request 1), the current and future timelines may require additional adjustments. Taking a bit more time now to get it right is critical ensuring success moving forward.
3. ***Ensure that the process and scope of social and economic impact assessments are collaboratively developed*** – Given the significance natural resources play in the economies and lifestyles of NCLGA member communities, a collaboratively developed (all four orders of government), comprehensive, locally/regionally focused social and economic impacts assessment is required to adequately address species at risk and help create new visions for community well-being (that reflect local/regional needs and opportunities). For example, there is currently significant confusion and concern regarding the May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 feedback deadline for the Draft Section 11 and Partnership Agreements (Provincial Caribou Recovery Program) which will occur prior to understanding the potential social and economic impacts. Once a collaboratively developed timeline is released (Request 2), a clearer understanding of relationships between agreements/processes will help enhance local/regional buy-in.

Local governments stand to inherit and address a significant portion of the environmental, social and economic impacts of the decisions associated with addressing species at risk and are keen to further engage with First Nations, Provincial and Federal governments to create shared visions for a sustainable future. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss the priority actions in more detail.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your reply and to a collaborative and productive relationship moving forward.

Yours sincerely,



Gordon Klassen  
President

Copied (6):  
Hon. Doug Donaldson, M.L.A., Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development  
Hon. George Heyman, M.L.A., Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
Hon. Selina Robinson, M.L.A., Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, P.C., M.P. Minister of Natural Resources  
Hon. Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P. Minister of Environment & Climate Change  
Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P. Minister of Infrastructure & Communities