

Nov 9, 2018

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

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

Hon. Scott Fraser
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
ABR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

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

RE: Southern Mountain Caribou Protection

Dear Premier and Ministers:

The Resource Municipalities Coalition (Coalition) believes responsible resource development sustains communities by addressing impacts on ecosystems as well as cumulative impacts to a healthy natural environment and to citizens by ensuring the provision of effective social services that improve quality of life while building a sustainable future.

The Coalition, like many Mayors and Chairs of local governments and regional districts in British Columbia, are concerned 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 impacted by this process.

Many of our member communities have attempted to engage with the Provincial Government throughout 2018 to “participate in the dialogue” and work with government on strategies to deal with the Southern Mountain Caribou, only to learn that plans have been employed, that will have a significant impact on the socioeconomic components of many communities within British Columbia.

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 reduce the quality of life for communities impacted by these actions.

The Coalition agrees with letters and conversations of affected communities that the Provincial Government engage and involve all communities in the discussion taking place as it relates to the impacts of resource development in the North and Interior. Communities need to be involved in the decisions that are being made as they may have negative economic impacts on the forestry, energy, mining, and tourism sectors.

The Coalition is recommending that the Premier and Provincial Ministers involved in the Caribou protection process, arrange to meet with all the Northern and Interior Mayors and Regional District Chairs to work collaboratively on developing a plan that mitigates the risks to both Caribou and community.

Respectfully,



Mayor Lori Ackerman
City of Fort St John



Mayor Rob Fraser
District of Taylor



Mayor Keith Bertrand
District of Tumbler Ridge



Mayor Joan Atkinson
District of Mackenzie



Executive Director Mike Whalley
Resource Municipalities Coalition

Cc: Don Wright, Deputy Minister
Office of the Premier

Geoff Meggs, Chief of Staff
Office of the Premier

Geoff Meggs, Chief of Staff
Office of the Premier

John Allan, Deputy Minister
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development

Mark Zacharias, Deputy Minister
Minister of Environment

Doug Caul, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and
Reconciliation