

## Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society

November 23, 2012

The Honourable Alison Redford  
Premier of Alberta  
Room 307, Legislature Building  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

**Attention: Premier Redford**

**RE: Bill 202 Public Lands (Grasslands Preservation) Amendment Act, 2012**

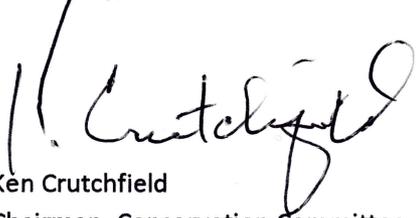
I am writing on behalf of the **Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS)**, a 250 member organization representing wildlife professionals in the province, to express support for Dr. Neil Brown's (MLA Calgary-Foothills) private members *Bill 202 - Public Lands (Grasslands Preservation) Amendment Act, 2012*. Early into your tenure ACTWS, along with many other conservation minded citizens and organizations, expressed concern over the government's decision to request proposals for the development of 16 000 acres of crown grassland. Thankfully, you acted decisively in withdrawing that 2011 Request for Proposal. More to the point, these lands were originally part of a 2010 proposal to transfer 84 000 acres of tax recovery crown lands to municipalities which was also eventually withdrawn after much citizen protest. Consequently, the ACTWS considers Dr. Brown's private members bill as a more public declaration of how Albertans would like its government to act in the future to decide whether to transfer ownership of crown lands, especially grasslands. Given your recent declaration that the government does not support the legislation at Second Reading, ACTWS remains hopeful that the government will see the prudence of the action detailed in the private members Bill. We urge that appropriate changes in government policy, guideline and procedure be made to realize the same outcome, albeit without the need for legislative statute.

Over many years the Alberta government has undertaken very progressive steps to safeguard the environment. And it has set in motion a Land Use Framework to guide future development in the province. It stands to reason that crown lands which have historically been devoted to more intensive

development should be considered for transfer. However, grasslands make up only 5% of the province and less than 25 % of this important area remains somewhat in its original state. We find that 40 % of Alberta's listed endangered or threatened vascular plants and 70 % of the province's mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species rely on these grasslands. Hence, the call for more open and transparent processes is necessary to ensure the decisions to transfer ownership are in the best interests of Albertan's and represent the objectives regarding natural land conservation and biodiversity.

We strongly urge our government to find a way to incorporate the very positive intents of Bill 202 into the policy and operational framework of the Alberta government.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Crutchfield', written over a vertical line.

Ken Crutchfield  
Chairman, Conservation Committee  
Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society

cc. Hon. Diana McQueen, Minister Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Dr. Neil Brown, MLA Calgary-Foothills