

Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society

March 9, 2011

Dr. Neil Brown, MLA
Calgary-Nosehill
Legislative Branch
16-5440 - 4th St. NW
Calgary, Alberta
T2K 1A8

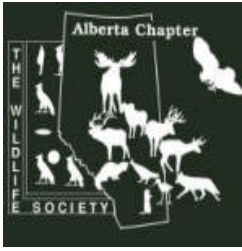
Re: Your private members bill regarding transfer of tax recovery land to municipalities

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am writing on behalf of the **Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society**, a 250 member organization representing wildlife professionals in the province, in support of your efforts to incorporate a clause necessitating public consultation regarding future land use on properties transferred to municipalities under the recent tax recovery land transfer program.

Our concern with the transfer program, which we relayed to the Premier and Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Sustainable Resource Development, is based on the fact that much of this land (75,000 acres) is located within the Municipal District of Taber and the County of Vulcan. Both these districts lie within the sensitive Grasslands Natural Region of the province. Grasslands make up only five percent of the province's land base and less than 25 % of this important region remains somewhat in its original state. This area in turn has suffered the greatest decline in biodiversity of all the provincial ecoregions over the past several decades. Consequently, the region presently supports the largest number of our wild species that are listed as endangered or threatened in federal and provincial species at risk legislation (i.e. 40 % of vascular plants and 70 % of mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species). Continued erosion and/or degradation of native grasslands will undoubtedly result in further decline of these species and likely lead to other prairie species being placed in these categories.

It is our fear that municipal governments will choose agricultural development (e.g. cropland or irrigated cropping) over retention, ignoring the facts that these remaining tracts are critically important to retaining some semblance of grassland ecosystem integrity.



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If the program is to continue, we appreciate and support your concern that there should at least be the opportunity for public consultation in decisions regarding future land use on these tracts.

Yours truly

Dave Scobie, President
Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society