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ALBERTA
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

*Office of the Minister
Government House Leader*

MLA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

MAR 09 2022

Sebastien Dutrisac, Chair
c/o Aaron Van Beers, Secretary
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Committee
101, 1101 - 5 Street
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Dear Sebastien Dutrisac:

Thank you for your letter regarding resolutions passed at the recent Agricultural Service Board (ASB) provincial conference. I welcome the opportunity to provide the following information.

The Government of Alberta acknowledges the current challenges the agriculture industry is facing regarding the supply and cost of feed stocks. Environment and Parks staff are prioritizing direct engagement with agricultural producers and municipal governments to seek solutions to wildlife-related conflict. The department agrees frequent and accurate population estimates are integral to properly allocating and managing ungulate populations. Safe and adequate winter survey conditions have become less predictable, challenging the ability of department staff to deliver the number of surveys typically completed during the winter season within a shorter window of opportunity. For example, within the Peace region, wildlife management units (WMUs) 359 and 526 were scheduled to be surveyed this winter, and I understand only WMU 359 was completed due to inadequate and unsafe survey conditions in WMU 526.

Ungulate population and depredation management is a complicated process requiring support from multiple areas of interest. For example, providing increasingly more elk licences is not always the best solution as it can often result in landowners becoming fatigued with hunters requesting access to their property. Hunters need to remain respectful and put in the effort, landowners need to provide reasonable access to land where elk reside (while acknowledging the consequences of not doing so), and producers need to be open to existing mitigation tactics to help prevent damages.

Since crop depredation is closely linked to winter conditions generally coinciding with deep snow or extreme cold temperatures, elimination of all landowner conflict can only be achieved through elimination of all elk. Although more elk can do more damage at a particular site, elk depredation can occur even at relatively low population numbers.

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Since 2010, the department has implemented a number of broad-scale management actions to reduce and mitigate ungulate-related crop damage, including the implementation of elk harvest strategies including:

- greatly increased harvesting opportunities for antlerless elk using the limited entry licence allocation approach,
- increased number of antlerless elk seasons, from one to three, to further facilitate hunter opportunity and harvest, while managing hunter crowding and mitigating landowner fatigue,
- extending the antlerless elk season to January 20 to increase harvest when depredation issues can become more prevalent, and
- implementing hunting on Sunday to further increase opportunity for harvesting.

Where local issues persist, Alberta government staff supply eight-foot-tall game fence to producers (at no cost) to protect stored livestock feed, they provide intercept feeding programs to mitigate potential damages, and they have a partnership program for producers to encourage the use of portable welded panels for protecting livestock feed.

Insurance for damages to eligible standing crops and eligible stored livestock feed is available (at no premium) to producers through the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC). I encourage those affected to visit <https://afsc.ca>.

As shareholders and investors increasingly factor environmental, social and governance performance into investment decisions, Alberta will work to ensure the province receives recognition for our actions on climate change and leading regulatory systems. In May 2019, the Government of Alberta repealed the *Climate Leadership Implementation Act*, ending the collection of the provincial carbon levy in Alberta. Alberta no longer collects such taxes. The Government of Canada's *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act* is not a provincial policy and the Government of Alberta does not support the federal government's application of their policy on Albertans. I encourage you to contact The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, MP, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, and The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to re-emphasize your concerns. Contact information for each Minister can be found at www.canada.ca by scrolling down to "Contact us."

Given Bill 206 is currently with the Senate, there might also be value in reaching out to senators who have been appointed to represent Alberta. Senators appointed to represent Alberta include: Patti LaBoucane-Benson, Paula Simons, Karen Sorensen and Scott Tannas. Contact information for each senator can be found at <https://sencanada.ca>.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,



Jason Nixon
Minister