

October 12, 2011

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0H3

Dear Minister Kent:

**Re: Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*),
Boreal Population, in Canada – Saskatchewan.**

I am writing to you to express my concern over the proposed *Recovery Strategy of the Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*), Boreal Population, in Canada* (the Proposed Recovery Strategy) that was released for public comment on August 26, 2011.

I am XXXX (President, shareholder, official) of Company XYZ. My company, which employs 123 people, is involved in providing goods and services to the mining sector in Saskatchewan for the past ABC years. During this time my company has done approximately \$\$\$\$ M worth of business with the northern mines. The mining industry is a primary driver of Saskatchewan's economy, particularly in northern Saskatchewan, the very region that this report targets for no additional development opportunities.

Northern Saskatchewan, like many places in Canada's North, is economically disadvantaged and infrastructure limited, with a sparse population of approximately 37,000 spread out over a wide geographic area. Eighty-five per cent of the population in the region is of First Nation or Métis ancestry, with an increasingly young population. The exploration and mining sector is the predominant employer and economic driver in the region. It is also the primary driver for students in the region to stay engaged in the K-12 school system, as the mining industry represents opportunity for students. The mining industry in northern Saskatchewan currently employs over 3500 people, including 1660 from northern Saskatchewan. Cameco, one of the operating mining companies, is the largest single industrial employer of Aboriginal people in Canada. In 2009, northern businesses and Residents of northern Saskatchewan earned approximately \$356.4M for goods and services and payroll from northern mine operations. Over \$3.39 Billion has been earned since 1991.

In reviewing the report it is hard not to immediately observe the discrepancies in the manner in which the different provinces and territories have been assessed.

In the Recovery Strategy, the entire northern Saskatchewan region is shown as unlikely to sustain boreal caribou populations, and is identified in blue, as "connectivity" populations.

As I understand, information provided in the report, and by Environment Canada officials in follow-up discussions with mining representatives, indicates that the proposed Recovery Strategy action plans for the blue "connectivity" populations will require the amount of undisturbed habitat to reach a threshold of 65% before any type of development or activity can proceed. Development would include new mining and exploration venture, infrastructure to support community growth such as roads and hydroelectric corridors, and timber harvesting. Hunting is also identified as a primary threat to some local populations, but it is unclear what repercussions this will have on the traditional lifestyle of First Nations and Metis people in the region.

The report identifies that naturally occurring forest fires already comprise in the range of between 49 and 65% disturbance in northern Saskatchewan. As a result the area is currently, and will likely be for the foreseeable future, well below the 65% undisturbed habitat threshold. As fire is a natural and necessary part of the forest fire ecosystem, it is not logical that the role of fire is the predominant factor in determining the sustainability of boreal caribou populations. Similarly, as human land use activities account for only between 2 and 4% disturbance in northern Saskatchewan, it is very difficult to come to the conclusion that human land use activities are a factor in the determination of boreal caribou populations in northern Saskatchewan.

The balance between environmental protection and economic growth must be struck, along with a more balanced ecosystem, rather than species specific outlook. This is particularly so during times of global economic uncertainty. Until more compelling evidence is available that human activities are a significant factor in determining the sustainability of caribou populations in northern Saskatchewan, I would respectfully suggest that development should be permitted to continue. As proposed, the strategy will cause irreparable harm to the northern businesses and communities involved in the sectors and not provide for infrastructure growth that the growing population in northern Saskatchewan requires.

Minister Kent, we would ask that you continue to ensure that socio-economic considerations be factored into decisions made by the Government of Canada, particularly where those decisions have the such critical far-reaching economic, social and environmental consequences.

We would be pleased to further discuss our concerns with you or your representatives.

Yours sincerely,

cc. Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Northern elected Leadership (eg. Chief Tammy Cook Searson, Chief Sayazie)
Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources Canada

Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance
Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture, MP Battlefords - Lloydminster
Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of Western Economic Development, MP Blackstrap
Honourable Andrew Scheer, Speaker, House of Commons, MP Regina – Qu'Appelle
Mr. David Anderson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of NRCan,
MP Cypress Hills – Grasslands
Mr. Ed Komarnicki, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources &
Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, MP Souris-Moose Mountain
Mr. Tom Lukiwski, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the
House of Commons, MP Regina – Lumsden - Lake Centre
Mrs. Kelly Block, Chair Saskatchewan Caucus, MP Saskatoon – Rosetown – Biggar
Mr. Rob Clarke, MP Desenthé - Missinippi – Churchill River
Mr. Randy Hoback, MP Prince Albert
Mr. Ray Boughen, MP Palliser
Mr. Garry Breitkreuz, MP Yorkton – Melville
Mr. Bradley Trost, MP Saskatoon – Humboldt
Mr. Maurice Vellacott, MP Saskatoon – Wanuskewin
Honourable Bill Boyd, Minister of Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources
Honourable Dustin Duncan, Minister of Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
Honourable Ken Krawetz, Minister of Saskatchewan Finance
Honourable Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Enterprise Saskatchewan
Honourable Ken Cheveldayoff, Minister of Saskatchewan First Nation and Métis
Relations
Honourable June Draude, Minister of Saskatchewan Social Services
Saskatchewan Mining Association Executive