



ALBERTA
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Lethbridge-West*

91174

February 22, 2018

Ms. Carolyn Campbell, Conservation Specialist
Alberta Wilderness Association
455 -12 St NW
Calgary AB T2N 1Y9
ccampbell@abwild.ca

Dear Ms. Campbell:

Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta, forwarded a copy of your letter regarding the protection of caribou habitat. She has asked that I respond on behalf of the Government of Alberta and acknowledge receipt of the postcards. I am also appreciative of your letter to me that provided detailed feedback on the Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan.

Caribou ranges cover approximately 23 per cent of Alberta and overlap with significant natural resources, including oil sands, oil and gas, coal and forest. The Government of Alberta is committed to stabilizing, recovering and ultimately achieving naturally self-sustaining caribou populations across the 15 ranges that fall under provincial jurisdiction. We are also steadfast in our commitment to maintaining jobs, local economies and strong communities.

It is imperative that we are proactive in our approach as the federal government has the legal power to halt all industrial activity in caribou ranges, potentially stranding resources, preventing future investment and eliminating economic benefits and jobs. Alberta's Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan is a working document that seeks to find a balance between achieving self-sustaining caribou populations, meeting federal requirements under the *Species at Risk Act* and addressing economic and environmental realities in our province. The draft caribou range plan is not a one-size-fits-all solution that will be applied across all ranges, nor is it a final plan. It is a pushing-off-point for further conversations at the local level to make sure we get it right for each range.

Approximately \$14.5 million was allocated in the 2017-18 fiscal year to support caribou recovery, which includes population management and habitat restoration, engagement and consultation, an investigation of rearing facility feasibility, and range plan development. I understand that you have been participating in the recent Indigenous/multi-stakeholder meetings. Please also ensure you continue to check for more information about public information sessions and future engagement opportunities and updates at <https://talkaep.alberta.ca/caribou-range-planning>.

In early 2018, continued engagement with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and the public is occurring on the draft provincial range plan to further inform completion of range-specific details. While we acknowledge that we need to work within federally imposed timelines, we will continue to work with people who understand the potential effects best and will take the time needed to get this right.

Thank you again for writing to share your concerns and ideas to advance caribou range planning. I will ensure that your feedback is distributed to the caribou range planning team for their consideration. It is detailed feedback, such as what you provided, that best supports advancing caribou range planning in Alberta.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon Phillips
Minister

cc: Honourable Rachel Notley
Premier of Alberta