



## **Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association**

*Box 340 Stavelly, AB T0L 1Z0*

September 9, 2012

Dr. Neil Brown, QC  
MLA - Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill  
513B Legislature Building  
10800 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Subject: AGLA's Position on Bill 202 – *Public Lands (Grasslands Preservation) Amendment Act 2012*

Dear Dr. Brown, QC,

The Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association will not be supporting Bill 202 despite recent attempts to change and clarify the bill. As we have previously stated, we feel that Bill 202 duplicates what is presently available to protect Alberta's native rangelands. This government has promised to review and streamline the regulatory framework and Bill 202 is certainly in contradiction to that philosophy.

While we understand that controversy over a recently proposed public land sale may have been the catalyst for creating a new review process, the AGLA firmly believes that the scrutiny as well as the checks and balances already exist within the present policies and legislation employed by our government. To involve the public in a review process every time there is an opportunity to sell or transfer a grazing lease would be an invitation for pure chaos and paralysis. One merely has to look at the gong show created by the Environmental Review for the proposed pipelines to get an idea of how this process would work... or not.

Leaseholders have always been a positive factor for wildlife and their habitat merely by enhancing and protecting the resource for our own business interests. Cattle operations and most wildlife are very compatible and the presence of the wildlife is enjoyed. However, AGLA believes that this bill was crafted and drafted with the idea of expanding the definition of wildlife and providing ridiculous regulation and control based on the expansion of that definition. Do not forget that

the reason wildlife are abundant on all agricultural land in this province is because of good stewardship, which the government has admitted that leaseholders provide.

Any resource user who has observed the application of the *Endangered Species Act* in the USA and the Species at Risk endeavors in Canada, should be very suspicious of any attempt to even go part way down this road. These pieces of legislation have been little more than anti-business opportunities for those who detest resource use.

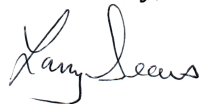
Across the province, AGLA represents over 1,100 grazing leaseholders and their families. Like a great deal of Albertans, AGLA believes that the government's role is to create an environment conducive to attracting business and stepping out of the way to let business do what it does best; create jobs and wealth. AGLA also supports the principle of the sale of crown lands into existing agricultural operations where logical, and firmly believes that the government should in no way be net purchasers of lands in Alberta.

Maintaining quality wildlife habitat does not have to mean jeopardizing the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers who utilize crown lands in conjunction with their deeded lands. Let us strive to make agriculture appealing to our youth, instead of chasing them away with high costs, low returns, and frustration over regulatory interference. The market will take care of the returns, but the regulatory hurdles, the cost of doing business, and the time it takes to satisfy ever expanding rules, rests on the shoulders of government.

Alberta cannot afford the folly of constant bickering over the environmental and societal values, be it crown or privately held land. It is far more important for society to secure the future of those in agriculture, as they are our food producers! If we fail to create a stable and predictable business atmosphere across all industries, then we will quickly lose our competitive environment and our Alberta Advantage mindset.

Please recognize that the very values that are supposed to be protected under Bill 202 and the wildlife that is cherished by all, are there because of good stewardship, sound management practices, and a belief system that farmers and ranchers have to improve these lands to enhance them for both wildlife and their livelihoods. Alberta does not need, nor can it afford more duplication and overlap in the management of these lands.

Yours truly,

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

Larry Sears  
Chairman, Alberta Grazing Leaseholder's Association  
cc: All Members of the Legislative Assembly