

10118 – 115 Ave.
Peace River, AB T8S 1L9
March 26, 2007

Hon. Ray Danyluk
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
#104 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Danyluk:

I am writing on behalf of the Peace River Environmental Society to voice our support for the creation of a province-wide land use framework as well as effective regional planning. We are now in a situation where municipalities in our area are competing for industrial, commercial and residential development, which is likely to lead to unnecessary encroachment on both wilderness areas and farmland.

This competition is also likely to lead to chaos in the provision of municipal services, with some services being duplicated and others not provided at all or provided inadequately. For example, much of the development happening in our area is within the borders of counties, where there are large deposits of oil sands and other natural resources. Therefore, the government body that is able to collect taxes from the resource companies operating within its boundaries does not often have to attend to the demand for services, including housing and health care. These services are located in nearby communities which do not collect revenue from the very persons who require the service.

Municipal taxation concerns us in another way as well. Under the existing system, there is no incentive for municipalities to conserve the environment or preserve farmland. Municipalities collect more taxes when they allow industrial, commercial and residential development. It is up to the provincial government to create a land use framework that protects wilderness areas from industrial encroachment and precious farmland from urban sprawl. We need to begin envisioning the kind of province we want to leave to our descendants 100 years from now.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to your response.

Yours truly,

Brenda Brochu
Chair, Peace River Environmental Society
c.c. Premier Ed Stelmach; Frank Oberle, MLA; Opposition Leader Kevin Taft; NDP
Leader Brian Mason