



ALBERTA  
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Whitecourt-Sie. Anne*

JUL 05 2017



Dr. David Swann  
MLA, Calgary-Mountain View  
Alberta Liberal Party  
201 Legislature Annex  
9718-107 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E4

Dear Dr. Swann:

Thank you for your May 19, 2017 letter requesting further information on planned timber harvest activity in the Highwood area south and west of Calgary.

I want to assure you that our Government is committed to the protection of land, water and environmentally sustainable industry practices. We continue to ensure a thoughtful and sustainable approach to forest management in the Kananaskis region and across the province.

Balcaen Consolidated Contracting Ltd.'s (Balcaen) decision to harvest its quota allocation for the Highwood area in a single season is permitted under the province's Timber Management Regulation. The total quota volume can be harvested in equal amounts in each of the five years, or it can be harvested over a shorter period of time. However, the total volume available for harvest remains the same.

Harvest activities are assessed by the department during the Detailed Forest Management Planning phase, when the submitted plans of the Forest Management Agreement holder are reviewed to ensure they comply with sustainable forest management practices, planning standards and approved operating ground rules. The department's assessment and hydrological modeling are based on the best available science and practices.

The operating ground rules recognize watershed management as an important part of protecting the natural environment. In addition, Section 7 of the approved operating ground rules for this area have specific criteria regarding operations in proximity to watercourses identified as containing Bull and pure strain Westslope Cutthroat trout. The ground rules outline specific steps companies must take in order to minimize any potential impact on those populations.

Spray Lake Sawmills, based in Cochrane, AB, is the Forest Management Agreement holder for the region and responsible for the broad planning. While Balcaen is based in British Columbia, the company is eligible to obtain a quota certificate in accordance with the principles of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement between Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

Dr. Swann  
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I want to assure you that Alberta's forestry sector remains strong, employing approximately 19,000 people in more than 70 communities and generating annual revenue of more than \$5 billion from forest products. We recognize the importance of forestry to the provincial economy and will continue to work with our stakeholders to maintain a vibrant and sustainable industry.

Thank you for sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Oneil Carlier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Oneil Carlier  
Minister

cc: Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks