



February 01, 2021

Mr. Roger Reid, MLA,
Livingstone – MacLeod Constituency
618 Centre Street, SE
High River, Alberta
T1V 1E9

Dear Roger,

RE: Oldman River Basin Water Allocation Order – Alberta Regulation 109/2010

The Councils of the Municipal District of Ranchland and the Municipal District of Pincher Creek have grave concerns surrounding the recent discussions and apparent direction on the part of the Province of Alberta to dismantle the very meaningful water allocation provisions that were set out in the above-cited Order.

The Order was created through a prerequisite process, that ensured extensive consultations with the immediately impacted municipalities. It is deeply troubling to see that this Order appears to be in the process of being dismantled, effectively with no consultation. What appears to be passing for consultation, is a rapid “drive-by” where provincial officials appear to be merely giving notice as to what is going to happen, as opposed to seeking meaningful input from the residents and jurisdictions impacted.

One of the original intents of the Order was to compensate those jurisdictions upstream from the Oldman River Dam for the impact due to the creation of the Dam project. A number of agriculture operations were moved out of the Oldman Dam footprint. The entire transportation network in the area was altered in a negative way, creating more time and expense for residents, and requiring them to go around the reservoir area. The intent of the Order was for the bulk of the water allocation to be used to enhance the irrigation potential in the upstream municipalities. In addition, the creation of the dam and reservoir displaced some existing irrigation operations that were already in place. It is very disappointing that the foundational principle of the Order seems to now have been forgotten or ignored.

Additionally, there is very little data on the potentially negative impacts of large industrial uses and withdrawal of water on the headwater tributaries and instream flows. We strongly believe that current stream flow testing should be conducted to establish baseline data for future reference. Decisions being contemplated to dismantle and arbitrarily remove sections of the Order, without first understanding the upstream usage and instream flow requirements for a healthy ecosystem are short-sighted and potentially detrimental.

Given the multitude of problems with the process to date, we respectfully but very strongly request that you cease any proposed changes to the existing Water Allocation Order – Alberta Regulation 109/2010.

It is critical that the Government of Alberta honour its past commitments and seek meaningful input from the residents and jurisdictions impacted by this Order, before even considering altering it in the future.

Sincerely,



Reeve, MD of Ranchland No.66



Reeve, MD of Pincher Creek No.9

cc.

Premier of Alberta, Honourable Jason Kenney

Minister of Environment and Parks, Honourable Jason Nixon

Minister of Energy, Honourable Sonya Savage