

October 6, 2011

Dear Mrs. Premier Designate -

We would like to extend our heart-felt congratulations on your recent victory in the Progressive Conservative leadership contest, and for becoming Alberta's 14th Premier. We would also like to extend our condolences on the passing of your mother, who by all accounts was an inspiration to you and many others.

We are writing on behalf of many concerned citizens, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Southern Alberta Chapter, the Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition, the Sierra Club of Canada, the Alberta Foothills Network and the Crown of the Continent Conservation. Collectively, we have been working to stop scheduled logging in the Castle Special Place and help advance a proposal for legislated and permanent protection of the Castle Special Place as a combination Wildland and Provincial Park. This recommendation grew out of a locally based multi stakeholder process and has been presented to multiple government ministries.

As the next Premier of Alberta you face many challenges and have many opportunities, and we look forward to the chance to provide you with input on how to advance an agenda that benefits all Albertans. Long-term protection for the Castle provides you with one such opportunity.

We believe that one of your first occasions to advance the long-term environmental health of Alberta will be the permanent protection of the Castle region as a combination Wildland and Provincial Park, as advocated for by local stakeholders. Fully 74% of residents in the region support this designation, and close to 80% are in opposition to the logging. As noted in our briefing package provided during the election campaign at the Connecting Environmental Professionals forum in Calgary, we feel that many of the barriers to long-term protection have been addressed through the patient and dedicated work of the local citizens of the region over the past years.

We would like to meet with you to exchange ideas about how legislating protection for the Castle can be done in a manner consistent with the needs of the province of Alberta and its citizens, and to outline what we think would be an expedient and timely way to ensure a major environmental victory for your new government. We have worked diligently to consider any remaining concerns to the creation of the park and stand ready to work with your government to address those concerns effectively and fairly.

There will be many opportunities for your government to advance environmental protection over the next months and years; we believe that permanent legislated protection for the Castle is "shovel ready."

We therefore request a meeting with you to discuss this at your earliest convenience. Although we represent a multitude of organizations and stakeholders, please contact Sarah Elmeligi at the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (selmeligi@cpaws.org; 403-232-6686 x6) to set up a meeting.

As a collaborative of Albertans, we are heartened by your commitment to change. Please consider us as partners in your effort to ensure a prosperous, healthy and environmentally sound future.

Respectfully,

Sarah Elmeligi, MNRES, PBIol

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Elmeligi', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Senior Conservation Planner
CPAWS Southern Alberta

On behalf of:

Dianne Pachal – Sierra Club of Canada

Robin Pisko – Alberta Foothills Network

Stephen Legault – Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative

Gordon Petersen – Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition