



## Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society

*“The mission of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society is to foster excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education among wildlife professionals in Canada”*

February 16, 2016

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay,

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

The **Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society (CSTWS)** is a professional organization representing wildlife professionals, managers and researchers in all the Canadian provinces and territories.

The *Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society* is committed to maintaining a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. It has direct linkages with the international parent body of *The Wildlife Society* whose mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

CSTWS recognizes the value of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) community pasture lands as some of the last large protected grasslands in North America. With over 80% of our natural grasslands already developed these pastures form a significant part of what is left of this ecologically important landscapes. Over 30 species at risk are found on these pastures, and the pastures are critical in maintaining these species. Preserving these lands in natural conditions can help meet Canada’s commitments to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and they also play an important role in carbon sequestration to help meet Canada’s climate change objectives.

The Government of Canada is currently in the process of transferring these lands to the provinces and the Province of Saskatchewan is considering sale of these lands into private interests. We are requesting that before any more land transfers are done that the a full Strategic Environmental Assessment of the risks to the natural and human heritage in these PFRA Pastures, in accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*.

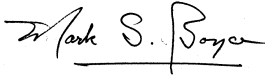
We feel the maintenance of the landscape and biodiversity, plus maintaining public benefits of grazing, recreation, and heritage sites is best done with legislative protection, continued public ownership, and maintaining the public benefits with public dollars. It is estimated that the annual benefits to producers

and society from these pastures is \$55 million dollars with an operating costs of \$22 million. This is an excellent investment for the people of Canada and the importance and benefits of PFRA lands can and should continue to be realized by the generations of Canadians to come.

Respectively yours;

Mark Boyce

Jim Allen



President, CSTWS

Chair, Conservation Affairs Committee

cc: The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

The Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

The Hon. Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs