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Canadians Can Stop Massive Wolf Kill

The deadline for Canadians to comment on the federal government's massive wolf-kill caribou recovery strategy is February 22, 2012. For most Alberta boreal woodland caribou herds, the wolf-kill strategy would allow 95% of their habitat to be destroyed. Tar sands and other oil-gas activities in those herds' ranges would not be disturbed. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is inviting Canadians to ask Environment Minister Peter Kent to protect the habitat caribou require for long-term survival and recovery, rather than encouraging decades-long poisoning and shooting of many thousands of wolves.

"Because of ongoing mismanagement of caribou habitat, Environment Canada's data shows Alberta's herds are by far the most vulnerable to being wiped out in all of Canada," says Carolyn Campbell, AWA conservation specialist. "This proposal will allow 95% habitat loss and many decades of massive scale wolf kills, for most Alberta herds. This is an absurd and deeply unethical strategy that sacrifices both wolves and caribou to unmanaged energy industry growth."

In the name of caribou recovery, hundreds of wolves have already been poisoned and shot from helicopters in northwestern Alberta. The federal government's draft caribou recovery strategy is now calling for a massive expansion of this approach. "There is no reason to think that killing wolves will recover caribou," says Campbell. "Only protecting caribou habitat will achieve that."

In healthy forests, wolf predation does not significantly affect caribou, points out Campbell. "These caribou are spread thinly across the landscape and do not support wolf populations in themselves," she says. Industrial development upsets this fine balance, bringing in larger numbers of other prey such as deer and moose and creating easy access corridors for wolves, resulting in more caribou being killed by wolves. Scientific studies agree that the only long-term solution for caribou is to have enough intact habitat to allow them to remain separated from deer, moose and wolves.

AWA asks Canadians to call on Environment Minister Kent to set sensible limits on forest disturbance in caribou ranges, and restore necessary habitat, as the first focus of the recovery strategy, rather than encourage massive wolf kills.

For more information:

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