



## **Alberta Government Deaf to Citizen's Logging Concerns**

For Immediate Release

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Beaver Mines, Alberta - Despite near unanimous opposition to logging in the Castle Special Management Area in southwestern Alberta, the Department of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) continues to push through with its ill-advised clear cut logging plans.

Yesterday morning, local residents went to the area where the logging is about to begin. They found the parking area cleared to accommodate Spray Lake Sawmills' logging equipment, and flagging tape marking the cut block boundaries. (Please see attached photographs.)

"It's unbelievable," says Gordon Petersen, President of the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, "that SRD still insists on this uneconomical logging in a matchstick forest despite public opinion polls that show that more than three quarters of regional residents are opposed to the logging, and despite the thousands of opposition e-mails, five rallies and protests across Southern Alberta, and the hundreds of letters and phone calls the government has received. Is there simply no way to influence government decisions?"

Experts on grizzly bears and watershed health have also spoken out against the logging, citing irreversible effects on ecosystem function and wildlife habitat quality. The logging will not only be detrimental to the watershed, wildlife, recreational opportunities, and area wilderness-based businesses, but will be an eyesore to everyone that drives to the Castle Mountain Ski area.

"They couldn't have picked a more obvious or unfortunate place to begin the logging", says Peter Sherrington, a local resident. "It's like SRD wants to hit the public hard and fast to take the wind out of any opposition."

"We're really talking about democracy here, or lack thereof", added Petersen. "SRD is putting the interests of a private company, as well as its own institutional interests, ahead of the public good. Clearly the majority of the public is against logging in the Castle, but SRD has been completely deaf to these concerns."

"We are appealing to the Premier to step in and stop the logging. Premier Redford has said that politics is changing in Alberta. Now she has an opportunity to demonstrate that the Conservative government is really listening to Albertans and what they want for their public lands", continued Mr. Petersen. "It's time to put an end to this folly. Stop the logging in the Castle, and permanently protect this Special Place once and for all."

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