

**From:** Alberta Wilderness Association [mailto:Alberta\_Wilderness\_Association@mail.vresp.com]  
**Sent:** February-06-13 8:44 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** AWA Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders: Little Smoky Caribou Need New Leases Stopped



Alberta Wilderness Association

February 6, 2013



**Dear Wilderness Defender,**

In violation of Alberta's 2011 woodland caribou policy that places an immediate priority on maintaining caribou habitat, Alberta Energy plans auctions of new oil and gas leases within the Little Smoky caribou range in west central Alberta on February 7, March 7 and April 25, 2013. Please take a moment to write Energy Minister Ken Hughes to request these lease sales be deferred until habitat can be restored for the Little Smoky caribou population, which is at imminent risk of local extinction.  
- Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist

**In This Issue:**

Request AB Energy  
Minister Defer New  
Leases in Threatened  
Little Smoky Caribou  
Range

AWA  
[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)  
[1-866-313-0713](tel:1-866-313-0713)

**The Issue**

Alberta Energy plans auctions of new leases within the Little Smoky woodland caribou herd range on February 7, March 7 and April 25, 2013. This will increase the already high level of disturbance (95%) faced by this herd, which is at imminent risk of local extinction.

**Background**

95% of the range of the Little Smoky caribou population was documented as disturbed in Environment Canada's 2011 and 2012 (draft and final) woodland caribou recovery strategy documents. This herd requires at least 65% undisturbed habitat to be self sustaining, as noted in the final federal recovery strategy.

Despite the 2011 Alberta woodland caribou policy, and despite horizontal drilling technology that could consolidate new exploration and production on a reduced footprint, the Alberta government has continued to issue leases and approve new surface disturbance, facilities, roads and well sites, including in the 5% that was formerly intact. This violates the Alberta Government's 2011 woodland caribou policy that states the immediate priority is maintenance of habitat, followed by habitat restoration.

Existing project-level operating guidelines by ESRD are woefully inadequate to address cumulative impacts of industry's footprint, and have been recognized as such by the Alberta government and industry via Alberta Caribou Committee work. The Alberta government's July 2010 woodland caribou status report stated that "current project-level land-use guidelines for industrial activities on caribou range in northern Alberta were demonstrated to be ineffective as a sole tool, in terms of providing for long-term caribou conservation." (p. 68) There is overwhelming scientific consensus that the root cause of this woodland caribou herd's decline is habitat fragmentation and loss from human disturbance.

Because of Alberta Energy's past unfettered mineral rights dispositions and ensuing habitat disturbance, ESRD resorts to a massive wolf kill in the Little Smoky range, shooting and poisoning over 650 area wolves from 2005-2012, and issues hundreds of moose hunting permits each year. To keep scapegoating other wildlife, ignoring technological approaches to avoid surface disturbance, and exacerbating the root cause of caribou decline is completely out of balance, and unethical.

[Link to AWA's Open Letter of February 6, 2013 to Minister Hughes](#)

**Take Action**

Please take a moment to write Alberta Energy Minister Ken Hughes to request that new leasing and disturbance be deferred until enough habitat can be restored to recover Little Smoky caribou populations.

Hon. Ken Hughes  
Minister of Energy, Government of Alberta  
#404 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6  
[Minister.energy@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Minister.energy@gov.ab.ca)

And please send us a copy at [ccampbell@abwild.ca](mailto:ccampbell@abwild.ca).

Thanks for Taking Action!

*Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action*

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