



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

June 27, 2013

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Email: pm@pm.gc.ca

Re: Govenlock Community Pasture

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Last year, the Canadian government announced the divestiture of the former PFRA community pastures. The PFRA community pastures contain a substantial amount of the remaining natural grassland in Canada. Agriculture and AgriFood Canada has a long history of managing those pastures for the benefit of species at risk and other ecological services. The economic value which accrues to Canadians of those ecosystem services may be as high as \$2000 per acre per year.

While the majority of community pastures are provincial land, the Govenlock Pasture is federal land. Govenlock is part of a block of three pastures that are of critical importance to grassland conservation. It has been identified as a priority grassland by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, is internationally recognized as being important for grassland birds through its status as an Important Bird Area, and it contains designated Critical habitat for Greater Sage-grouse and other species at risk. We know from experience that the effort and expense of recovering a species from the brink of extinction is much greater than maintaining healthy populations. We have attached Briefing Notes on Govenlock for your reference.

AWA urges you to maintain Canada's commitment to grassland conservation and establish the Govenlock Pasture as a National Wildlife Area under the management of Environment Canada. As a National Wildlife Area, Govenlock would continue to contribute to the market economy through the provision of grazing opportunities to the local ranching industry.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Wallis", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cliff Wallis
AWA Vice-President

cc:
Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment minister@ec.gc.ca
Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada ritzg@agr.gc.ca