



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

April 14, 2018
Mayor Naheed Nenshi,
Email: themayor@calgary.ca

Premier Rachel Notley
Email: Premier@gov.ab.ca

Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Email: Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca

Re: Olympic Bid Exploration by the City of Calgary

Dear Mayor Nenshi, Premier Notley and Minister McKenna:
Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is writing today to request that any Olympic bid exploration by Calgary must recognize National Parks are not a suitable venue. To consider using National Parks ignores the priorities and goals Canadians have for them. We also caution that any expansion to facilities at venues such as Nakiska to accommodate the Olympics must remain within their existing footprint.

Background

From a historical perspective, there has been widespread opposition from Canadians to bids for the Olympic Games in 1964, 1968, and 1972. Much of this opposition stemmed from the proposal to use Banff National Park for events that undermined its national and international significance for the protection of wildlife and wilderness values. Consequently, the 1988 Olympic Games facilities were built outside of the National Park and existing facilities within the National Parks were not used for events. The Nakiska location chosen for downhill ski venues was significantly contentious because it impacted important bighorn sheep habitat. If Nakiska is being considered as a venue, it must not be allowed to expand its facilities beyond its current footprint.

Banff National Park is not lacking for tourism, which is often claimed to be a major benefit of hosting the Games. Constructing infrastructure and hosting the Olympic Games will degrade this vitally important natural area. As well, there is compelling evidence to conclude that Banff is at or has surpassed its carrying capacity. Further large-scale development would be at odds with the long-term and legally entrenched vision of the National Park. Limits to ski area development are also legislated under the *Canada National Parks Act*.

Lake Louise Ski Resort pled guilty in December 2017 to charges under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Canada National Parks Act* for cutting down at least 39 endangered whitebark pine trees in 2013. The inability to operate within environmental values in one of Canada's most significant and protected environmental areas strengthens arguments against venues in National Parks for Olympic Games.

Banff National Park is an important protected area for wildlife and rare plants. The Park provides critical habitat to various species at risk, such as grizzly bears, westslope cutthroat trout, and bull trout that must be protected. Habitat disturbance and fragmentation harmed the Park's caribou population, and contributed to their extirpation in 2009. AWA believes hosting events at the scale of the winter Olympics

jeopardizes the first priority of the Parks Canada mandate: to maintain or restore the ecological integrity of the Park¹.

Finally, the management plan states that proposals will be evaluated through a structured public review process. Any prospect of using Banff National Park as a potential location for Olympic Games events must have an inclusive public review process. Public review processes in years past have shown, time and again, that Canadians do not want the Olympic Games in areas set aside to protect wildlife and ecosystem values.

AWA has been working throughout Alberta for more than fifty years towards more representative and connected protection of the unique and vital landscapes that are the source of our clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat. With over 7,000 members and supporters in Alberta and across Canada, AWA helps Albertans learn more about the value of our wilderness and wildlife, and participate in opportunities to protect and care for the legacy that we will leave for future generations. Our work to defend and protect our National Parks and Alberta's wilderness landscapes is recognized and well known. AWA believes using a National Park to provide a venue for Olympic winter games is inappropriate.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to knowing more about your deliberations and your decisions.

Sincerely,
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

Nick Pink
Conservation Specialist

With copies of this letter to the following:

Daniel Watson, Chief Executive Officer for Parks Canada Daniel.Watson@pc.gc.ca

Dave McDonough, Field Unit Superintendent Dave.McDonough@pc.gc.ca

Melanie Kwong, Field Unit Superintendent Yoho/Kootenay/Lake Louise Melanie.Kwong@pc.gc.ca

Karen Sorensen, Mayor of Banff, Karen.sorensen@banff.ca

City of Calgary Councillors:

Ward 1 - Ward Sutherland

Ward 2 - Joe Magliocca

Ward 3 - Jyoti Gondek

Ward 4 - Sean Chu

Ward 5 - George Chahal

Ward 6 - Jeff Davison

Ward 7 - Druh Farrell

Ward 8 - Evan Woolley

Ward 9 – Gian-Carlo Carra

Ward 10 – Ray Jones

Ward 11 – Jeromy Farkas

Ward 12 – Shane Keating

Ward 13 – Diane Colley-Urquhart

Ward 14 – Peter Demong

¹ The 2010 Banff Management Plan states (emphasis added): "In implementing its core mandate that integrates heritage resource conservation, visitor experience and public appreciation and understanding, the Parks Canada Agency gives **first priority to maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity**. This ensures that national parks will remain unimpaired for the benefit, education and enjoyment of future generations."