ALBERTA

ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

Office of the Minister

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Ruiping Luo

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Thank you for your email to the Honourable Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations, and me about extending *Wildlife Act* designation to Plains bison. I appreciate your passion for this important species.

Environment and Protected Areas recognizes Plains bison have cultural, ecological, and historical significance to Indigenous communities in southern Alberta. The department is interested in hearing from all Albertans interested in Plains bison conservation, protection, and management. To date, this work has included collaborating with Parks Canada on the reintroduction of Plains bison to Banff National Park, as well as construction of four secondary bison containment fences east of the Upper Red Deer Special Bison Area.

Environment and Protected Areas is reviewing the status of Plains bison in Alberta for further consideration under the *Wildlife Act*, beyond the current designation of Plains bison as a Subject Animal within the Upper Red Deer Special Bison Area. Recognizing a species under the *Wildlife Act* and Wildlife Regulation specifies the protections afforded to the species.

Considerations related to free-roaming bison include the potential need for managing the population's size and distribution, and possible disease transmission to or from livestock and people. In addition, excursions of free-roaming bison onto private lands requires deliberation. These are all significant issues that would be of interest to many Albertans.

For more information, please contact Mr. Craig Johnson, Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Director – South Region, in Lethbridge, at 403-382-4346 (dial 10-0000 for a toll-free connection), or at craig.johnson@gov.ab.ca

Thank you again for your email. The Government of Alberta always welcomes Albertans' perspectives on the management of wildlife.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas

cc: Honourable Rick Wilson
        Minister of Indigenous Relations