



ALBERTA
TRANSPORTATION

*Office of the Minister
Government House Leader
MLA, Edmonton - Highlands - Norwood*

February 1, 2019

AR 74978

Mr. Greg Boehlke
Reeve
Rocky View County
911 32 Avenue NE
Calgary, AB T2E 6X6

Dear Mr. Boehlke:

Thank you for your January 11, 2019 letter regarding the Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1 or Project). It is clear that the Council for Rocky View County has a number of issues and concerns with the Project. Rocky View County is an important stakeholder to the Government of Alberta as well as Alberta Transportation, the Project proponent.

We are providing the following written responses to the issues and concerns expressed in your letter. We would welcome the opportunity to meet in person and provide further information and to discuss issues and concerns. If the County is interested, I will arrange to have Alberta Transportation meet with you in the very near future.

Request to Halt Project

The Government of Alberta remains committed to flood mitigation for the City of Calgary and other communities. It has been five years since the devastating flood and the City of Calgary is still without comprehensive flood mitigation. SR1 is a large piece of that comprehensive flood mitigation and critical to mitigating flood events on the Elbow River. SR1 will provide about 80 per cent of the mitigation needed for the Elbow River and with the Glenmore Reservoir gates, will protect to the 2013 level.

The Government of Alberta is focused on getting SR1 approved and, given that the project is now four years in to the environmental assessment and regulatory processes, it would be irresponsible to withdraw the project application at this late stage.

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The Selection of SR1

By way of background, a number of flood mitigation options were identified and evaluated in 2014 as having potential to serve as flood mitigation on the Elbow River, including the Priddis Creek option. The two options that showed the most potential were SR1 and the McLean Creek (MC1), and those options went through a more vigorous evaluation process. For a number of reasons - fewer environmental effects, shorter construction schedule and less cost - SR1 became the preferred option. The decision between MC1 and SR1 was reviewed in 2014 and again in 2015. Both reviews lead to the same conclusion which is SR1 is the project which best meets the flood mitigation requirements on the Elbow River. Throughout the exploration, evaluation, and analysis for the SR1 Project, we have taken opportunities to present to the public and stakeholders in order to inform the evaluations of the Project.

Comprehensive Flood Protection

Flooding in southern Alberta is an annual risk that cannot be prevented, and no one project can protect all communities on the Elbow River from flooding. As the Elbow River will continue to flood, the Government of Alberta is working to remove the worst of the flood flows through a comprehensive flood mitigation approach. This approach includes the provincial funding of berms at Bragg Creek (being delivered by Rocky View County), berms at Redwood Meadows (work delivered by Tsuut'ina Nation), and berms along the Elbow River downstream of Glenmore Reservoir. In addition, the City of Calgary is in the process of upgrading gates on the Glenmore Dam, which will provide an additional flood mitigation capacity.

Drought Protection

Flows on the Elbow River are relatively low, at approximately three cubic metres per second in winter and up to 25 cubic metres per second in June (the high flow month). With the relatively low annual flows already present in the Elbow River, drought protection would be better addressed through options on the Bow River.

Engagement with Indigenous Groups

Alberta Transportation has been consulting on SR1 with the Treaty 7 First Nations (Blood Tribe, Piikani Nation, Siksika Nation, Stoney Nakoda Nations, and Tsuut'ina Nation) since August 2014. In August 2016, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency identified other Indigenous groups (Ermineskin Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe, Montana Nation, Samson Cree Nation, Foothills Ojibway Society, Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3, Ktunaxa Nation Council of British Columbia, and the Métis Nation of British Columbia) to consult with.

We continue to meet with all the identified Indigenous groups including Tsuut'ina Nation, whom we have met with six times since submitting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in March 2018. We have provided capacity funding for Traditional Use Studies (multiple studies by the Tsuut'ina), facilitated site visits, and provided capacity funding for continuing consultation to all the Indigenous groups whom have requested it. These meetings have been forums to discuss the following:

- the project;
- their specific concerns;
- mitigation measures; and
- opportunities for future land-use of the area including the practice of treaty rights and traditional use.

Land Use Plan

The last point is one that has come about since we tabled our original land use plan in the EIA. We heard from Indigenous groups, as well as the public and from Rocky View County, that additional work was needed on the land use plan. We have recently made this offer to the Indigenous groups and would like to extend the same to the Council: we would like to bring together interested groups and work collaboratively to create a land use plan for the SR1 area. We see the opportunity to develop a land use plan that could benefit residents of Rocky View County.

Offer to Meet

We are currently proceeding through the federal and provincial regulatory processes to address key issues such as potential impacts to the environment, potential effects to rights and traditional uses and the public interest. Through our work and studies we have been able to capture the information required to answer the questions raised by regulators, Rocky View County and the public. While this information can be found in the March 2018 EIA, we recognize that the information is presented in a highly technical format within a very large document, and we would like to create an opportunity to address Rocky View County's concerns and offer to have our technical experts meet with your administration. Crystal Damer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation Services/Springbank would be glad to meet with your administration. She can be contacted at crystal.damer@gov.ab.ca or by phone at 780-415-1281.

We thank you for the efforts you put forward on behalf of Rocky View County and would like to ensure we keep the conversation going.

Sincerely,



Brian Mason
Minister

cc: Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks