



*Office of the Minister
MLA, Airdrie-Cochrane*

AR42450

December 12, 2022

Mr. Vance Buchwald
westcountrysustain@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Buchwald:

Thank you for your November 21, 2022, letter to Premier Danielle Smith regarding coal mining in the Eastern Slopes. As Minister of Energy, I welcome the opportunity to address your concerns on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Our government has committed to protecting the areas Albertans cherish, while allowing responsible resource development where appropriate. In response to concerns raised by Albertans about potential coal development, all new coal-related exploration and development activities in the Eastern Slopes are restricted through a ministerial order. The reinstated 1976 coal policy also remains in place. These restrictions will remain in effect until direction on coal activities has been embedded in new or updated land-use plans. To support the unique needs of the area, this work will include comprehensive consultation with Albertans, Indigenous communities, and others. In addition, all existing legislation related to coal activities and Alberta's rigorous regulatory system continue to be in place.

The development of coal resources in Alberta follows a rigorous regulatory process that begins before a mine is built and continues after mining is completed. Obtaining a coal lease from Alberta Energy does not permit exploration or development activities without additional regulatory approvals by the Alberta Energy Regulator. Cancelling coal leases before land use planning is complete would be premature and is not necessary due to the expanded restrictions on coal exploration and development that are now in effect. Future decisions about coal leases will be made as land use plans are completed. We committed to approaching this complex issue with care and we are continuing to honour our commitment.

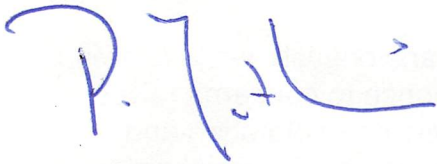
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One of Environment and Protected Areas' current planning priorities is completing caribou sub-regional plans. Two sub-regions, Upper Smoky and Berland, overlap the northern portion of the Eastern Slopes; these plans will consider coal. Planning for both these areas is underway. No timelines have been established yet to complete plans further south, including for Clearwater County.

Earlier this year, the Government of Alberta gathered input from stakeholders, and Indigenous communities and organizations to help inform our review of the Mine Financial Security Program. The input was also to help find long-term solutions for collecting funds from industry to cover oil sands and coal mine reclamation liabilities. For more information about this review including progress updates, please visit the public engagement website at www.alberta.ca/mine-financial-security-program-engagement.aspx.

Thank you again for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,



Pete Guthrie
Minister

cc: Honourable Danielle Smith
Premier of Alberta

Honourable Sonya Savage
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas