



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: ADM-BRD-037

From: Crystal Brown, Electoral Area Manager

Date: June 17, 2020

Subject: UBCM Resolution – Ranching Concerns

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board submit the following resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities for consideration at its 2020 convention:

WHEREAS residents are concerned with the lack of service that is offered by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, including a lack of staff with experience or training in ranching related issues, high turnover, and unreasonable delays in communications and approvals; and

WHEREAS ranchers are faced with numerous delays in approvals for fence installation due to the removal of natural boundaries by third party operators; and

WHEREAS ranchers are facing hardships and are unable to properly manage their tenures due to a lack of qualified staff who can assist ranchers with range burning applications;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities petition the Province to bring up staffing levels in the range department so that grazing tenures or license issues are dealt with more timely and efficiently to prevent entire grazing seasons being lost.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On March 26, 2020, the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED, and CARRIED

That the Regional Board refer the correspondence dated March 5, 2020, from Dan Davies, MLA for Peace River North, regarding the management of ranching issues by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MoFLNRORD), to staff; further, that staff work with the Electoral Area Directors to draft a resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities regarding the gaps in services provided by MoFLNRORD as they pertain to ranching, as indicated by MLA Davies.

Local Range Tenure holders in the region have experienced a number of issues regarding their tenure. Decisions by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MoFLNRORD) don't seem to be made in a timely manner and the process seems to lack clarity.

In 2019, a decision by the MoFLNRORD on authorization to install a fence was outstanding for more than 180 days, creating a problem containing cattle to the tenure area for the 2020 grazing season.

Range burning applications have been changed, making it impossible for a tenure holder to fill out, and expensive to have done by a professional. In January 2019, a burn plan was filed for maintenance burning of traditionally burned areas in the range tenure. The burn plan followed requirements discussed with Wildfire Services BC and covered all aspects that were required for burn plans in the past. Range maintenance burning has been regularly and successfully conducted on this tenure for decades and has been maintaining carrying capacity for livestock, as well as contributing to biodiversity and forage available to wildlife. A rejection letter of the filed plan was received several months after the burn window. This comes at great cost to the tenure holder. Range maintenance burning is an important tool of range management.

Range Use Plans (RUP) for existing tenures, which must be submitted upon expiry of previous RUP's are now unnecessarily difficult and burdensome to complete.

Local office procedures are threatening a tenure holder's ability to stock the range at previously approved rates until a new tenure inventory can be completed. This is an internal issue within MoFLNRORD, and should not create a hardship for the tenure holder.

MoFLNRORD is allowing natural cattle movement barriers to be removed by logging companies but not requiring or allowing fencing to be put in its place, creating hardship for the tenure holder, and going against Forest Practice code.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

If approved by the Regional Board, the resolution will be forwarded to UBCM for consideration.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

The deadline for resolutions submitted directly to UBCM is June 30, 2020.