



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

March 5, 2020

Honourable Doug Donaldson  
Minister of Forest, Lands, and Natural Resources  
Room 248, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC

Dear Minister Donaldson,

I have enclosed five letters from concerned constituents from North-Eastern British Columbia. These constituents have raised several concerns relating to your Ministry's handling of ranching issues.

They are concerned with the lack of service that is offered by FLNR, including a lack of staff with experience or training in ranching related issues, high staff turnover, and unreasonable delays in communications and approvals.

There is also a large concern over the removal of natural boundaries by third party operators (often logging companies). The third-party operators have not been consistently replacing these boundaries, and both they and the Ranchers have faced numerous delays in approvals for fence installation.

Additionally, the Ranchers are facing hardships in filling out and submitting their range burning applications. The lack of qualified staff in your office, who can assist with these applications, is contributing to this issue. This is preventing them from properly managing their tenures and limiting the grazing area for their cattle.

These delays and issues have continued for significantly longer than reasonable. I look forward to your response on what is being done to help these Ranchers.

Best regards,

Dan Davies  
MLA for Peace River North

CC: MLA John Rustad FNLRO Critic  
MLA Donna Barnett Rural Critic  
PRRD Board

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BC Liberal Official Opposition  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4  
T: 250-356-6171

**Subject:** FW: Range Tenure Crystal Springs Ranch, Upper Halfway, Tenure # RAN 074995  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:55:03 AM Pacific Standard Time  
**From:** Davies.MLA, Dan  
**To:** Davies, Dan

[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 12:08 AM  
**To:** Davies.MLA, Dan <Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Range Tenure Crystal Springs Ranch, Upper Halfway, Tenure # RAN 074995

Dear Mr. Davis

Thank you for meeting with the Range Tenure holder group on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at your office. We have been experiencing some issues regarding our tenure in 2019, two of which are explained below:

1. Timber Harvesting, removal of natural boundaries:

With an amended Forest Operation Schedule (FOS) for this area coming into effect, response was made to the Licensee and to BSTS outlining concerns regarding movement of cattle in the newly harvested areas. An agreement was reached for construction of approx. 7 km of fence. The extent and pace of the timber harvesting near the range boundary made this the only possible solution. The project was broken into phase 1 and 2, each phase relating to specific Cutting Permits and application for authorization of the fence was made to FLNRORD in May 2019. As harvesting activities followed directly along with the planning, in fact some harvesting preceded the planning stages, cattle could not be contained as soon as grazing season started.

Some intermediate steps of increased riding and fencing had to be taken to utilize the range and adhere to the Range Use Plan.

However, no decision was made by FLNRORD on the authorization of the fence.

The timber licensee as well as BCTS acknowledged the need for fencing, a services agreement with the licensee was signed for construction of the fence, pending authorization by FLNRORD.

As of Wednesday, February 5, 2020 the licensee has decided to honor the services agreement and compensate for phase 1 of the work done by the range tenure holder.

However, a decision by the Ministry on authorization has been outstanding for more than 180 days and phase 2 cannot proceed. This will create the problem of containing cattle to the tenure area for the grazing season 2020, starting on June 1.

2. Range Maintenance Burning:

The burn plan filed for maintenance burning of traditionally burned areas in the range tenure was filed in January 2019. 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. Throughout the spring burn window it was uncertain if an authorization would come. Since burning requires planning and preparation this left a lot of uncertainty. When the rejection letter finally arrived, it only allowed the conclusion that filing a successful burn plan will be almost impossible. A trained Natural Resources Specialist may be able to address the numerous aspects listed in the rejection, however this comes at great cost to the tenure holder. Range maintenance burning has been conducted successfully and is an important tool of range management.

As for 2020, a Professional Biologist has been retained to prepare the burn plans, yet the time of

engagement was October 2019, already too late for the deadline of September 2019 to file the 2020 plans. Incidentally this deadline was communicated to the retained professional in November of 2019. With that, no new burn plan authorizations for this tenure for spring 2020.

These are two examples of issues that are very important to successful range management and that are time sensitive. Decisions by FLNRORD don't seem to be made in a timely manner and the process seems to lack clarity. To Range Tenure Holders it should not be required to retain the help of Natural Resource Specialists, rather Range Staff should have the time and resources to guide and assist with applications.

Kind regards,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

**Subject:** FW: Grazing licence

**Date:** Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 8:21:53 AM Pacific Standard Time

**From:** Davies.MLA, Dan

**To:** Davies, Dan

[REDACTED]

**Sent:** Monday, February 10, 2020 11:10 PM

**To:** Davies.MLA, Dan <Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

**Subject:** Grazing licence

Dan,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us and all your efforts in helping us to resolve these issues.

1. Our aum's have been changed from 3,140 to 980, because of negligence on the part of forestry staff.
2. They have been invoicing us on the 3,140 aum's, that we had worked our way towards, and we have been remitting payment of the full amount.
3. We worked our way up from 980 to 3,140, through the process that forestry requires for an increase in aum's, by burning.
4. This increase, as of now, has been erased by Tanya and Greg, employees of forestry.
5. Also, as of this date, we have been unable to acquire a burn permit for the last 2 years, which is necessary to increase our aum's and maintain grass management.
6. Forestry is being most difficult in trying to resolve this situation.
7. This imposition would require us to drastically reduce our herd numbers, which would cause a huge financial loss.
8. This has been forestry's error and they are not taking responsibility to fix this. They say their hands are tied, and that they can't leave our numbers as is, because of government regulations. (district manager not signing off)
9. We are not alone in this, forestry has many issues with other lease holders. ie. fencing, Canfor, logging and First Nations.
10. This is a very serious issue and time is of the essence, with summer turnout close at hand.

Thank you again for your time and concern with this situation!

[REDACTED]

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



**Subject:** Fw: FLNRO concerns on Range Tenures  
**Date:** Monday, February 10, 2020 at 12:02:38 PM Pacific Standard Time  
**From:** Davies.MLA, Dan  
**To:** Davies, Dan  
**Priority:** High

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[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** February 10, 2020 11:30 AM  
**To:** Davies.MLA, Dan  
**Subject:** FLNRO concerns on Range Tenures

Dear Mr. Davies MLA,

I am a rancher in the North Peace and am writing this letter over concerns regarding FLNRO as they relate to our operations.

We have got to a point where FLNRO provides many stumbling blocks and few solutions. Here are a few examples:

- Range burning applications have been changed so as to make it impossible for a tenure holder to fill out, and expensive to have done by a professional. Even when professionally done the permits are not being granted. Range burns are necessary to maintain forage and reduce wildfire danger.
- Range Use Plans for existing tenures which must be submitted upon expiry of previous RUP's are now unnecessarily difficult and burdensome to complete
- Local office incompetence / mishandling of documents and procedures is resulting in a tenure holder being threatened to not stock the range at previous approved rates until a new tenure inventory can be completed. This is an internal issue within FLNRO and should not create a hardship for the tenure holder
- FLNRO is allowing natural cattle movement barriers to be removed by logging companies but not requiring OR allowing fencing to be put in its place, thus creating hardship for the tenure holder and in fact going against Forest Practice code.
- Forage has a very low priority within FLNRO, and the vast majority of grazing tenures fall within the ALR. As such it is important to recognize the agricultural aspect of these tenures.

In an attempt to keep this brief I will stop here, but in reality the list is much longer. I am not alone in noting that the Ministry is more interested in putting up road blocks for the agricultural sector than making any effort to assist in making it competitive and vibrant.

Any effort you could put towards holding the Ministry to it's mandate would be much appreciated.

Best Regards

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** FW: FLNRO-RD SERVICE

**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 12:43:12 PM Pacific Standard Time

**From:** Davies.MLA, Dan

**To:** Davies, Dan

[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 12:30 PM

**To:** Davies.MLA, Dan <Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

**Subject:** FLNRO-RD SERVICE

MLA

Peace River North

Dan Davies,

This letter is to bring to light the inadequate service provided by the Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development branch out of Dawson Creek, BC. As a member of the BC Cattlemen's I have been dealing with them for 20+ years and my family for many years previous. Since taking over the ranch we have given FLNRO every opportunity to communicate and work together on arising issues. We invited them to numerous Cattlemen's meetings, gone to their office for meetings, provided contacts through email and phone. For years we and many others have been very dissatisfied with the lack of service. Our ranches are our livelihood and most have been in our family for years. FLNRO makes running our ranches difficult at every turn. The amount of turnover within the organization is frustrating as every year we have a new person to deal with. This means explaining issues over and over again. Dealing with people who do not understand the industry cost us time and money. No one ever gets back to us with any answers on numerous questions and issues. I personally have been waiting for my application for a rental grazing tenure since 1999. I have inquired numerous times in the last 20 years as to its status. I just got a call in Aug of 2019 from Tanya Sharko regarding the application. She told me she would mail me the correct paperwork to get things moving. I followed up with her at a Cattlemen's meeting in Dec 2019 and she wrote a note in her book. I'm writing this letter in Feb of 2020 and still have received nothing. Just one of many examples of the constant incompetence from FLNRO.

In conclusion the services or lack of for that matter from the FLNRO are unacceptable. I and many others have invested countless hours trying to get answers and bring new staff up to speed on issues. I am requesting staff get back to us in a timely manner, follow up with concrete answers, and perhaps put someone on staff who understands the industry and is willing to stay in their position for longer than a year.

**Subject:** FW: FLNRO and Range Tenures

**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:53:42 AM Pacific Standard Time

**From:** Davies.MLA, Dan

**To:** Davies, Dan

[REDACTED]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2020 4:57 PM

**To:** Davies.MLA, Dan <Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

**Subject:** FLNRO and Range Tenures

To Dan Davies MLA, Peace River North

This is a follow up letter to our meeting on February 3, in regards to our Ministry of Forest, Land, and Natural Resource Operation department in the North. It is felt by myself and other grazing tenure holders that we are not getting the proper support from the FLNRO office, when it comes to grazing. Some of the key problems, that I feel, are:

- making burning permits so complex for the rancher to fill out that you can't get a burn permit to maintain grazing quality
- losing key files that pertain to one's grazing history and or new files that have been completed then lost in their office
- no recognition of revenue that a grazing tenure provides to the province on an annual basis for the last forty years and that we always take a back seat to forestry and its logging, that only can be harvested every 80 years
- not taking action when a natural barrier has been removed by third party (logging company), and allow cattle to leave ones tenure
- they don't make grass a priority even though most tenures fall under the ALR

Thank you for taking the time to look into this.

[REDACTED]