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Province of
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Legislative Assembly



Donna Barnett, M.L.A.
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January 22, 2016

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Langevin Block
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

As the MLA for the constituency of Cariboo-Chilcotin, in the Province of British Columbia, I am writing to you today with a very serious concern. My riding covers approximately 44,000 kms with a population of around 33,000 citizens. There are ten First Nation bands in my riding, consisting of the Tsilqot'in (5 bands), Xení Gwet'in, Tsi Del del, Tl'esqox, Yunest'in, Tletinquoxtin, The Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw, (4 bands) Tsq'e scen', Xqat'tem, T'exelc, and the Ulkatcho Band which are members of the Chilcotin Tribunal Council.

As you are no doubt aware, the Williams Title Case is also in the Cariboo-Chilcotin – a land marking decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in June of 2014.

This decision is one which we all believe will help to make our communities stronger and help economic development for First Nations in the Title Area. We fully support working together supporting all walks of life.

Mr. Prime Minister, we the tax payer and those affected by this Court decision need your help. During a period of time in 1983 – 1984, under the leadership of the Rt. Honourable Pierre Trudeau, add ons were made to the Canadian Constitution. It is my understanding that Section 35 initially consisted of clauses (1) and (2). Clauses (3) and (4) were further developed as a result of consultations with Aboriginal representatives during the First Ministers Conference on Aboriginal Rights in March of 1983. These clauses were added after lengthy campaigns by

women's groups who believed they were underrepresented in the initial discussions and experienced systemic gender discrimination from such legislation as Bill C-31.

My constituent's, who are tax paying hard-working, long time families have not been treated fairly by this decision. Your courts gave title to First Nations, while we have no issue with this, it leaves no accountability to the private land owners, and businesses within the Title lands. You, the Federal Government have responsibility to ensure all humans are treated fairly. This is one of the most unfair situations I have ever witnessed. This decision is causing private land owner's and business people to lose their homes and unnecessary social and economic hardship is occurring.

Another grave concern in this area is the ongoing - 23 year - treaty negotiations with the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmuw (NSTQ). There has been an agreement in principal signed with the NSTQ which they will vote on on February 11th, 2016. The treaty process has been one that has been a closed process to the public, a nontransparent process. Should the NSTQ vote to accept the Agreement in Principle (AIP), ranchers will be put out of business due to Crown Land being transferred from their grazing leases to First Nation Lands.

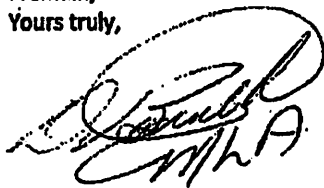
First Nation Treaties are a joint Provincial and Federal agreement, and my understanding is that your government is responsible for the monetary part of the Treaty. The issue now is that there is no consideration or compensation for ranchers. Ranchers are historically the builders of our region, the backbone of our communities. We need your Government to provide financial compensation to the ranchers who will be affected by this Treaty.

Mr. Prime Minister, without full compensation to help the tax payers who have lost their rights to develop resource industries, this region will become one of crime, loss of population, and the area of Cariboo-Chilcotin will suffer severe devastation. Our economy is based on resource industries - mining, forestry, ranching and tourism. Without our ability to work on the land and develop these resources, this region will be destroyed.

I invite you to come to this region to meet with myself, and taxpayers who are affected by this decision. If this is not convenient, myself and a small committee of local taxpayers are prepared to come to Ottawa.

I look forward to your reply.

I remain,
Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Barnett', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Donna Barnett MLA
Cariboo-Chilcotin

Cc: Cathy McLeod MP
Todd Doherty MP