

August 7, 2007

Hon. Rob Renner  
Minister, Alberta Environment  
425 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister:

Re: Pigeon Lake Watershed Association/Pigeon Lake Water Quality and related issues

I am responding to your July 4<sup>th</sup> letter to the Pigeon Lake Residents Group. The Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (“PLWA”) has recently merged with the Pigeon Lake Stewardship Society and includes representatives of the Pigeon Lake Residents Group on its Board of Directors. The PLWA is a volunteer self-help group. Its purpose is to enhance, preserve and protect Pigeon Lake and its watershed by using the best methods available to study the lake and its ecosystems, communicate best practices to users, advocate effective policies by governments and regulators, and take a leadership role in lake and shoreline cleanup. The merged group has representatives from all areas around the lake and the watershed, including lakeshore owners, working and retired permanent residents, small and large business owners, the professions, farmers, a cow-calf operator, a buffalo rancher, sport and Metis food fishers, and families who work in the oil & gas industry. As you know tens of thousands of Albertans visit the lake annually.

Attached is a copy of the Association’s initial news release and recent media coverage. Please note the level of interest in Pigeon Lake. The Leduc Representative and County Market publications ran front page stories, and excellent articles were included in the Edmonton Journal, the Wetaskiwin Times Advertiser and The Lake Schooner, a supplement to the popular Pipestone Flyer. More information on the Association can be found at <http://pigeonlakewatershedassociation.com>.

The PLWA has become active on a number of fronts. We are working with the summer villages, the counties, the province, and others to develop a strategy to meet our goals. The PLWA is concerned about the water quality of Pigeon Lake and we support the implementation of a regional wastewater strategy for the entire lake area. This has been communicated to local residents, the consulting firm leading the public consultations on its recommendations about additional infrastructure, and the steering committee which will choose the model which will be implemented. As you may be aware the lake suffered a significant toxic blue green algae problem in 2006 which has re-emerged sporadically in 2007 and which is currently being monitored by the PLWA, Alberta Environment and David Thompson Health Region. Walleye and lake whitefish kills which are the product of both human and environmental factors have also become more noticeable.

We are currently in the process of meeting with all of the new summer village councils around the lake, Leduc and Wetaskiwin county staff and councilors, and other interested groups like the Pigeon Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce, service clubs and church groups, to express our support for both short and long term measures to address lake water quality and management. Senior representatives of the Pigeon Lake Regional Chamber have voiced support for our objectives and our approach to the issues facing the Pigeon Lake area. We have become members of the Pigeon Lake Chamber and the Alberta Stewardship Network. We are leading the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup around Pigeon Lake in September. We have launched a membership drive and a public education and information program. We are attending local farmers' markets. We are partnering with a variety of knowledgeable groups which provide helpful information and advice to those living in watersheds. We are researching and discussing joint public information meetings with the summer villages regarding solutions to the toxic blue green algae problem, Dr. David Schindler, the well regarded environmental specialist, has agreed to be our keynote speaker at the Association's AGM on September 29 to inform our members about his work and the challenges which face us.

We have invited our local MLA Tony Abbott, Leduc and Wetaskiwin county councilors, the Chair of the Association of Pigeon Lake Municipalities and a representative of the Energy and Utilities Board to meet with our Board on September 8 to discuss the outstanding issues associated with the lake. We have reached out to the First Nations community and we plan to meet with representatives of the provincial parks in the area and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The Association is commissioning a baseline report summarizing prior studies of the lake and its watershed. Once the report is completed we will be bringing forward recommendations on specific actions across a broad spectrum for residents of Pigeon Lake and its watershed, day users, governments and regulators to enhance, preserve and protect the lake.

In the interim we suggest that you appoint a steering committee to assess issues like the toxic blue green algae situation and to consider appropriate short and long term courses of action. We suggest that the steering committee be made up of representatives from Environment; Health and Wellness; Sustainable Resource Development; Tourism, Parks and Culture; the David Thompson Health Region, the Association of Pigeon Lake Municipalities and the Pigeon Lake Watershed Association. There are environmentally friendly technologies available in Alberta which produce rapid reductions in toxic blue green algae levels.

I spoke with David Helmer at the wastewater strategies meetings. Representatives of our group would be pleased to meet with him or other Environment staff to discuss the various issues associated with the stewardship and sustainability of Pigeon Lake and its watershed. For your additional information we are also meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development to review progress on the fisheries management strategy for Pigeon Lake, we have engaged the oil and gas industry with respect to its impact on the lake and its watershed, and we are participating in the

dialogue with a developer who has expressed an interest in a high density development within close proximity to the south shore of the lake.

We do not oppose economic development, but we are hoping that each of these processes will result in benchmarks which will enhance, preserve and protect the lake and the surrounding area for generations of Albertans to come. We may also be able to establish processes and benchmarks which would be of value to other watershed communities in the province. We would like to work with government, regulators, industry and the community to achieve these ends.

Please feel free to contact me at P.O. Box 227, Westeros, Alberta T0C 2V0, (780) 586-0710. Thank you for your interest in the health of Pigeon Lake and its users, and your attention to this matter. We appreciate the leadership your department has shown to date in its support for stewardship groups, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to resolve the water quality and other issues confronting Pigeon Lake.

Yours truly,

Jim Stevens  
President, Pigeon Lake Watershed Association

- a. Peter Watson, DM – Environment  
David Helmer, Manager - Environment

Hon. Ray Danyluk  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Shelley Ewart-Johnson, DM

Hon. Dave Hancock  
Minister of Health & Wellness  
Paddy Meade, DM

Hon. Ted Morton  
Minister of Sustainable Resource Development  
Brad Pickering, DM

Hon. Hector Goudreau  
Minister of Tourism, Parks and Culture  
Fay Orr, DM

Hon. Mel Knight  
Minister of Energy  
Dan McFayden, DM

Brad McManus  
Acting Chair  
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board

Kim Eastlick  
Advisor, Business Operations & Development  
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board

Tony Abbott, MLA  
Drayton Valley-Calmar

Brian Keeler, Chair  
Association of Pigeon Lake Municipalities

Richard Wilson, Councillor  
Wetaskiwin County Division 5

Nancy Watson, Councillor  
Wetaskiwin County Division 6

Frank Coutney  
County Administrator  
Wetaskiwin County

Ruth Harrison, Councillor  
Leduc County, Division 6

Douglas Wright  
County Manager  
Leduc County

Mayors, Summer Villages of Pigeon Lake  
Administrators, Summer Villages of Pigeon Lake

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