



ALBERTA

ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

*Office of the Minister
Government House Leader
MLA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre*

110721

April 26, 2021

Reeve Paula Law
Lacombe County
RR 3
Lacombe AB T4L 2N3

Dear Reeve Law:

Thank you for your letter regarding unpaid property taxes by oil and gas companies in Alberta. I appreciated meeting with you on March 17, 2021, to discuss wetlands, water allocations/storage and the Gull Lake stabilization project. I have consulted with my colleague the Honourable Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs, and I welcome the opportunity to provide the following information on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

The Alberta government has legislated responsibilities through the *Surface Rights Act* (available at open.alberta.ca/publications) to ensure landowners affected by oil and gas developments are duly and fairly compensated for the associated inconvenience and loss of land use. This includes the protection offered by Section 36 of the act, whereby the Surface Rights Board may direct the Minister of Municipal Affairs to pay unpaid surface lease payments owed by an operator under a surface lease.

The Alberta government is focused on protecting the rights of landowners and operators by ensuring fair and timely hearings at the Surface Rights Board.

Due to a significant increase in Section 36 applications, the board is working through a large backlog that has resulted in longer wait times for payment. To assist with the backlog, the Alberta government provided the board with additional funding in Budget 2020-21 to hire additional staff and board members to expedite the review and processing of Section 36 applications. With the extra

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funding, the board is now on track to eliminate the backlog of applications by June 2021.

As briefly discussed at our recent meeting, unpaid oil and gas tax burden is a complex issue that Minister McIver and the Honourable Sonya Savage, Minister of Energy, have been working on.

As we also discussed at the meeting, regarding the issue of twinning Highway 11, I understand Environment and Parks staff are arranging a meeting with Lacombe County and Minister McIver. To arrange a conference call, please contact my scheduling assistant, Shannon Hamelin, at 780-668-8358 (dial 310-0000 for a toll-free connection), or at shannon.hamelin@gov.ab.ca.

Thank you again for taking the time to write, and I look forward to continuing our conversations on these and other topics of interest to the county.

Sincerely,



Jason Nixon
Minister

cc: Honourable Sonya Savage
Minister of Energy

Honourable Ric McIver
Minister of Municipal Affairs