



**A leading voice for a healthy and
environmentally sustainable
community.**

Box 383 Lethbridge AB T1J 3E9

19 April 2016

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Lawrence.Macaulay@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister MacAulay:

Re: Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) Community Pastures

The Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE) is a non-profit, volunteer organization that advocates and advances environmental sustainability in our region. We are writing to ask that you halt the transfer of any more PFRA Community Pastures to the provinces and that there be a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the decision made by the previous government to end the Community Pasture Program of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Program and transfer the lands to the governments of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

As we live in a prairie region, we are well aware of the value of our nation's remaining native grasslands for biodiversity (including about 90 Species at Risk), for carbon sequestration, for soil and water conservation, for livestock production, for outdoor recreation and for preserving and interpreting our cultural heritage (indigenous and homesteading). Nationally, native grasslands occupy less than 20% of their pre-settlement extent. Community Pastures in Saskatchewan comprise a significant amount of what remains. Privatization of these lands will likely result in degradation and outright loss of these significant values.

We are deeply concerned over the impending demise of PFRA pastures, including sale of native grassland parcels already undertaken by the government of Saskatchewan. We are pleased to see a recommendation from the Federal Standing Committee on Finance (March 2016) that "The federal government consider re-establishing the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Program." We encourage you and your colleagues to act on that recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Barber", written in a cursive style.

Braum Barber
Chair

cc:

Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca
Hon. Ralph Goodale, MP for Regina-Wascana Ralph.Goodale@parl.gc.ca
Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn.Bennett@parl.gc.ca
Right Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, Justin.Trudeau@parl.gc.ca