



BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia

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Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
PO BOX 9049, STN PROV GOVT.
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Email: FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

BCCA File: 2023-011
SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Honourable Minister,

RE: Reseeding of Burned Areas

Wildfires are something that our province has experienced at an alarming rate over the last number of years. As climate change continues, there is anticipation that fires around the province will continue to increase in frequency and intensity. Fires have devastating impacts on the landscape, including loss of invaluable ecosystems, damage to soil integrity, and altered waterways.

Another devastating impact after a wildfire, is the delayed action to mitigate the damage and ensure the integrity and resiliency of our environment. Post-fire restoration has been repeatedly neglected and/or delayed. Delays in reseedling have caused replanting seasons to be missed, with invasive plants getting a toehold. As a result, ecosystems can be lost or permanently altered.

Timely revegetation of burned areas is vital for sequestering carbon to mitigate that released in the wildfire. Forage quickly restores cover, protecting and stabilizing the soil, slowing overland water flow, providing protection against invasive plant species, and it sequesters more carbon below ground where it is less likely to be released by wildfire. Protecting our soils until the lost ecosystem can be fully restored, is crucial to environmental health.

Members of the BC Cattlemen's Association have asked us to strongly encourage government to prioritize timely forage seeding in recently burned areas using a seed mix mutually agreed on by the tenure holder and Range Branch Ecologists.

Ranchers are stewards of the land, who help to enhance the ecosystems and biodiversity on many landscapes. Our natural BC landscapes, be they grasslands or forested, are what we are known for worldwide. Soon our tourism industry will also be in jeopardy. Let's work together to do a better job protecting and restoring our ecosystems after wildfire.

We welcome further conversations with your ministry on how to effectively address this issue.

Respectfully,

Brian Thomas, President
BC Cattlemen's Association

Judy Madden, Chair
BCCA Environmental Stewardship Committee