



BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia

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April 15, 2024

Hon. Katrine Conroy
Minister of Finance
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Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

BCCA File #: 2024-019
SENT BY EMAIL
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Dear Minister Conroy:

RE: Reconciliations Impacts on the Economy

Our Association is gravely concerned by the recent projections on the economy.

Ranching has served as the cornerstone of the rural economy for more than a century. Agriculture, forestry, mining, and energy collectively constitute the resource sector, contributing to nearly half of British Columbia's economic foundation. Our province heavily depends on its abundant natural resources to sustain its economy.

The BC Cattlemen's Association is concerned that the resource sector will be the most impacted by reconciliation efforts and co-management agreements. Resource industries, such as mining and LNG, can partner with Indigenous nations by offering high paying employment, the effects may be reduced. Agriculture, ranching in particular, does not have those incentives to offer to our Indigenous neighbours. Nevertheless, our operations heavily depend on access to Crown land and water resources.

I've been receiving feedback from our members regarding the recent reconciliation initiatives and agreements, and it seems they're causing tension and discord in our communities. Ranchers have been integral parts of our communities, maintaining longstanding relationships with our Indigenous neighbours. We hold common values concerning sustainable land use and the importance of leaving the land in better condition for future generations.

According to a recent [news article](#)¹, reported that the private sector is in retreat and the province is facing an eight-year recession. The article features insights from David Williams, a senior policy analyst at the Business Council of B.C. Additionally, Trevor Tombe, an economist at the University of Calgary, remarks on B.C.'s underperformance economically, considering its status as a wealthy province. This sentiment is echoed by reports indicating a slowdown in rural ranch sales due to heightened uncertainty surrounding the stability of B.C.'s resource sector and economy.

I have always appreciated your willingness to speak frankly when meeting with us. Could you please elaborate on the province's long-term vision for reconciliation? Specifically, I'm interested in understanding how this plan encompasses strategies to maintain stability in the rural resource economy.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this while I am in Victoria for BC Beef Day on May 14th.

Yours truly,

Brian Thomas, President

¹ Vancouver Sun article. Douglas Todd, "How to stop B.C.'s 'bleak' economy falling further behind"
<https://vancouversun.com/opinion/columnists/douglas-todd-stop-bc-bleak-economy-falling-further-behind>