



# County of Wetaskiwin No. 10

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December 9, 2015

Honourable Rachel Notley  
Premier, President of Executive Council  
Office of the Premier  
Executive Branch  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Dear Premier:

**RE: Bill 6: *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act***

Since the introduction of the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*, otherwise known as Bill 6 on November 17, 2015, the County of Wetaskiwin has been made aware of significant questions and concerns from the citizens that we represent and have been asked to comment regarding this proposed legislation.

First and foremost, the County of Wetaskiwin strongly supports the ongoing improvement of safety for all workers in the Province of Alberta, including workers within the agricultural sector. However, the County of Wetaskiwin wishes to express a number of concerns regarding the processes and details surrounding Bill 6 that have arose since the introduction of this proposed legislation.

Regarding comments made that consultation was completed by the Government of Alberta prior to the introduction of Bill 6, the County of Wetaskiwin would like to note that no consultation or providing of information has occurred between County of Wetaskiwin Council, County of Wetaskiwin Agricultural Service Board, and the Government of Alberta, including from the MLA for Wetaskiwin-Camrose. Aside from severely limited and oversubscribed information sessions and protest events that have provided opportunity for a minimal number of affected Albertans to express their concerns, the County of Wetaskiwin believes that there has been a completely inadequate level of consultation that has occurred regarding all facets of Bill 6 by the Government of Alberta with stakeholders in the agricultural sector, including the recently announced amendments. A significant number of County of Wetaskiwin residents have echoed similar comments to numerous elected officials and members of administration.

Furthermore, the County of Wetaskiwin questions why the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties (AAMDC) was also not consulted prior to the introduction of Bill 6, as was stated in a letter sent to the Honourable Lori Sigurdson dated November 27, 2015. The Government of Alberta missed a prime opportunity to consult with hundreds of elected officials and members of administration that represent rural Alberta regarding Bill 6 at the AAMDC Fall Convention being held at the same time that Bill 6 was introduced, but no mention of Bill 6 was made by yourself or members of your Cabinet that spoke during the event.

Finally, the County of Wetaskiwin believes that Bill 6 has been perceived as inherently flawed by many citizens impacted by the agricultural sector due to inconsistent information and limited clarity being provided by the Government of Alberta, as recognized by many members of your caucus, regarding this proposed legislation. Details regarding how the approximately 43,000 family farms across Alberta will be impacted by this legislation have not been clearly outlined by the Government of Alberta. The County of Wetaskiwin recognizes that the regulations for Bill 6 have yet to be developed. However, the County of Wetaskiwin believes that in order to be prudent as legislators, potential ways in which citizens are impacted should be clearly outlined before any legislation is passed in order for adequate input to be sought. The deliberation of Bill 6 in the Alberta Legislature occurring at the same time as consultation sessions does not allow for this to be accomplished. Amendments to Bill 6 have tried to provide clarity, but the way in which these amendments have been brought forward has created the perception that all key stakeholders within the agricultural sector were not fully consulted, leading to legislation that is not tailored to the unique circumstances and challenges found within the Alberta agricultural sector.

In closing, the County of Wetaskiwin strongly encourages that the Government of Alberta suspend the passing and implementation of the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* and bring forward the legislation for consideration only after all impacts to citizens have been clearly outlined in the initial legislation, which would be the basis for any regulations enacted, and that all key stakeholders within the Alberta agricultural sector have been fully consulted regarding the proposed legislation and the impacts that will arise from the implementation of the legislation. The County of Wetaskiwin does recognize that closure on debate of Bill 6 was enacted on December 8, 2015, but believes that the passing of Bill 6 with implementation to occur on January 1, 2016 will have irreversible consequences to Alberta agricultural sector and rural Alberta as a whole.

Farming and ranching is not just a business, but also a way of life for a significant number of Albertans that have contributed to the prosperity of Alberta for generations. The County of Wetaskiwin strongly believes that these citizens should be given the respect to have their concerns and uniqueness of their situation reflected in any proposed legislation moving forward.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding the position of the County of Wetaskiwin, please advise. The County of Wetaskiwin hopes that the Government of Alberta does take both our concerns and the concerns of all affected Albertans seriously and look forward to a resolution that can be accepted by all parties.

Yours sincerely,



Kathy Rooyackers  
Reeve

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cc: Honourable Lori Sigurdson, Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour  
Honourable Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry  
Honourable Danielle Larivee, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Mr. Bruce Hinkley, MLA, Wetaskiwin-Camrose  
Mr. Mark Smith, MLA, Drayton Valley-Devon  
Mr. Ronald Orr, MLA, Lacombe-Ponoka  
Mr. Wes Taylor, MLA, Battle River-Wainwright  
Mr. Al Kemmere, President, Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties (AAMDC)