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February 3, 2021

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

VIA E-MAIL: rycroft@rycroft.ca

Office of the Mayor,
Village of Rycroft
PO Box 360
Rycroft, AB T0H 3A0

Attention: Mayor James Verquin

RE: Reinstatement of the 1976 Coal Development Policy

Dear His Worship:

In June of 2020, the Government of Alberta rescinded the Coal Development Policy (Coal Policy) without adequate consultation with First Nations, environmental groups, residents, property owners and local governments. This policy was originally developed with the intended purpose to guide coal extraction along the eastern slopes of the Rockies based upon a land use classification system and dictated where and how coal leasing, exploration and development could occur.

The Coal Policy introduced in 1976, guided coal extraction in one of the most important landscapes in Alberta and Canada. The Eastern Slopes provides water to users from the Rockies to the Hudson Bay. For 44 years, the policy provided essential protection of valuable water resources, ensuring downstream communities had access to clean drinking water, that farmers had access to irrigation water to protect their livelihoods and that ecosystems that tourists come to experience remained in their pristine state.

The rescindment of any policy that affects public lands and/or water resources, requires public consultation with First Nations, environmental groups, residents of Alberta, property owners and local municipalities. Without that consultation, our democratic processes are undermined.

In response to the Government of Alberta's action, the Town of High River's Council adopted the following resolution at its Regular Meeting of Council on January 11, 2021:

> ***BE IT RESOLVED THAT*** *Council direct Administration to draft a letter to Premier Jason Kenney, requesting the immediate reinstatement of the 1976 Alberta Coal Policy which was rescinded on June 1, 2020;*

AND THAT *the letter requests that the Government of Alberta begin public consultation with Indigenous groups, environmental groups and all stakeholders in Alberta on any proposed revisions or replacement to this policy;*

AND FURTHER THAT *this letter be sent to the Minister of Environment & Parks Honorable Jason Nixon, Minister of Energy Honourable Sonya Savage as well as the MLA for Livingstone-Macleod Roger Reid.*

This letter was sent to the Premier and Ministers on January 12, 2021 and a meeting has been requested with the Premier. To date, the Town of High River has neither received a response to our letter nor a meeting with the Premier.

Other local governments, public officials and Albertans have called upon the Government of Alberta to reinstate the Coal Policy. In response, the Government of Alberta has cancelled some of the coal leases but this is not adequate in order to protect water resources for downstream communities, such as High River.

Therefore, at the February 1, 2021 Special Meeting of Council, the following resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS *Council adopted resolution #RC 14 -2021 requesting the Province of Alberta immediately re-instate the 1976 Coal Development Policy;*

AND WHEREAS *coal exploration and open pit mining will impact water resources for downstream communities affecting businesses, residents, ranchers, farmers and ecosystems;*

AND WHEREAS *coal exploration is causing irreparable damage to the landscapes and watersheds as well as adversely affecting the public's access, use and enjoyment of Crown lands on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta;*

AND WHEREAS *local First Nations groups, municipalities, landowners and ranchers are legally challenging the Province's rescindment of the 1976 Coal Policy in the Courts;*

BE IT RESOLVED THAT *Council request all coal exploration be immediately ceased on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta and cease issuance of any new exploration permits on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta until public consultation has taken place regarding the future of coal mining on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta;*

AND THAT *Council request the Government of Alberta & Premier Jason Kenney issue an immediate stop work order for all existing coal exploration permits on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta and cease issuance of any new exploration permits on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta until public consultation has taken place regarding the future of coal mining on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta;*

AND THAT *Council direct Administration to investigate legal options relating to the damage caused due to exploration on Alberta's Eastern Slopes.*

AND FURTHER THAT *Council direct Administration to prepare a letter with a copy of this resolution to all members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, Municipalities of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and Association of Manitoba Municipalities requesting their support to re-instate the 1976 Coal Development Policy.*

In light of this resolution, the Town of High River is respectfully requesting that you consider drafting a letter of support to the Government of Alberta for the immediate Exploration Stop Work Order as well as the reinstatement of the Coal Policy.

Thank you for considering our request,

Sincerely,

Craig Snodgrass
Mayor

CS/cp/kr