



July 13, 2011

Dear Premier Selinger:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Boreal Initiative and the Pew Environment Group, regarding woodland caribou. Woodland caribou herds are in decline across Canada's boreal region. History and experience teach us that if nothing is done about this situation it can ripen into a resource management crisis. We have enclosed a briefing paper entitled "Keeping Woodland Caribou in the Boreal Forest: Big Challenge, Immense Opportunity." This analysis was prepared by a panel of internationally recognized scientists and it shows that significantly improved stewardship of woodland caribou is necessary to maintain healthy populations of this magnificent animal, which is so important ecologically, culturally, and economically.

Specifically, these scientists advise that very large protected areas need to be established across Canada's boreal region in order to maintain the levels of intact boreal habitat necessary for this species to persist. They emphasize that the time is now — government-supported actions are needed through land use planning for conservation and sustainable development to ensure that this iconic boreal species remains a part of our future, rather than a memory of our past.

Your government has provided outstanding, world-class leadership on boreal forest conservation issues, particularly on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg, and for this we applaud you. However, for caribou to survive and prosper, it will be critical for Manitoba to incorporate state of the art scientific analysis into management planning efforts in the remainder of the boreal forest, particularly in the region of the Tolko Forest Management Agreement. Moreover, it will continue to be critical for your government to successfully engage aboriginal people in land management planning processes by providing resources, respecting and reconciling aboriginal and treaty rights, and sustaining a government-to-government dialogue with leaders. Your track record in this regard is laudable but more will be needed to meet the challenge of safeguarding the future of woodland caribou populations and the communities they sustain.

We would be pleased to provide a detailed briefing on the analysis, and look forward to the opportunity to discuss this priority matter with your government.

Sincerely,

Steve Kallick
Director, International Boreal Conservation Campaign
The Pew Environment Group
1904 Third Avenue, Suite 305
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 905-4800; skallick@pewtrusts.org

Larry Innes
Director
Canadian Boreal Initiative
30 Metcalfe Street, Suite 402
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5L4
(613) 230-4739 x226; linnes@borealcanada.ca

Cc: The Honourable Bill Blaikie, Minister of Conservation
The Honourable Eric Robinson, Deputy Premier and Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs