



## Morgan Wilson



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March 20, 2025

Ms. Chelsae Petrovic  
MLA, Livingstone-Macleod  
Box 760,  
4927, 1<sup>st</sup> Street West  
Claresholm, Alberta  
T0L 0T0

Dear Ms. Petrovic

I am writing as a Livingstone-Macleod constituent to voice my concerns and opposition to the potential coal developments and indiscriminate logging on the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains near where I grew up.

I spent much of my young life on our family ranch scarcely 10 km from the foot of that first range of mountains. The northernmost peaks of the Livingstone Range were framed in the window of our family home. Mt. Sentinel, Plateau Mountain, and the Hailstone Lookout are ingrained on my visual memory. We can still see that montane profile from where we now live southeast of Nanton.

One of the things I most revere of that slice of territory is the watershed. I lived on the north fork of Willow Creek where it enters Chain Lakes reservoir. My family lives there still. To say that it remains as it was in my youth would be inaccurate. Not only has the creek changed course as many mountain streams do, it has also changed character. Once a pristine stream with a bountiful trout population, it now is less fish friendly due to increasing sedimentation. The headwaters of the Willow and many of its tributaries have been aggressively logged resulting in increased sediment being transported by mountain runoff from slopes denuded by that logging. It once took days for a heavy mountain rainfall to increase creek levels. Now with no barrier to runoff, creek levels fluctuate very quickly leading to frequent eroding high water events that only exacerbate erosion and sedimentation. The proof in the pudding is the large accumulation of sediment in the Chain Lakes reservoir that yield large mud flats when reservoir levels fall during dryer periods.

The Willow Creek watershed is no exception. Very similar conditions are happening on the Livingstone and Oldman rivers. Logging and coal exploration has damaged terrain leaving it very susceptible to wind and water erosion. If I was a landowner or lease holder there and I interfered with water courses, hillsides, or stands of trees to further my business operations, I would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law if I was in contradiction to environmental requirements. Those requirements are strict guidelines that govern how we interact with water courses, topography, and vegetation. All designed to limit impact on wildlife and the vegetation that holds the soil together.

Unless I'm a resource company seeking to harvest timber or to explore and mine for coal. Then, it seems that there are two sets of regulations. If I need to access a hilltop to build a pad for a coal exploration drill site, I can gouge a trail across a stream and hillside and level off as much earth as needed to be able to situate equipment. If I need to access a stand of timber, I can do the very same thing.

With no regard to how those soil disturbances foul trout streams, create dust storms during wind episodes, degrade or remove erosion preventing vegetation, and make physical barriers to wildlife movement. All things I would be prohibited from doing if I held a simple grazing lease to raise cattle.

There are more restrictions to me to dig a small water reservoir or dam a small stream to service livestock than there are to remove a mountaintop to mine coal or clear cut a valley on both sides of a major river system.

The emissions from that herd of cows are more than offset by the benefit to soil regeneration and vegetation control lowering wildfire risk. They most certainly don't make the water toxic or cast carcinogens into the wind to be breathed in by those living downwind.



Coal mining emissions make the water toxic and pollute the air with coal dust and heavy metals. There is a very low acceptable limit to some of the contaminants coal mining produces. It's been shown that mitigation methods are not successful at removing those contaminants. The risk to the watersheds are too great in relation to any economic benefits proposed for mining operations. These statements aren't merely speculative. The Alberta Government's own research is showing the impact of air and water contamination from the Elk Valley. Airborne particulate matter is being blown into Alberta watersheds out of the British Columbia operations. Contaminants are being leached into the Crowsnest Lake and River and Blairmore Creek from existing mines at Grassy Mountain and Tent Mountain and have been for generations.

In a word, all of this activity – particularly coal mining – on the Eastern Slopes and where those tributaries feed the most economically and ecologically significant watersheds in Southern Alberta, is lunacy. We're at a tipping point due to many environmental factors – not the least of which is climate change. We've endured several years of sub average moisture in our snowpacks and growing season precipitation. It has put a magnifying glass on our water supply and usage. Several million people in our province depend on snowpack and glacial runoff for drinking and industrial water. Many more hundreds of thousands depend on ground water and well sources. These aquifers are depleting. It is unknown where many of these aquifers' recharge zones are. It's quite possible they're under those same mountains that the Alberta Government are so keen to sacrifice to line some very large corporate pockets. It is offensive to consider diverting one single drop of that water to a toxic venture. It's also offensive not to take measures to keep it from being laden with excess sediment as it cascades through clear cut terrain.

When cities no longer have glaciers to provide their water, when irrigators have no reliable and safe supply, when rural residents' wells go dry, we'll be left with only a scar on the land. Those predatory coal companies will vanish and leave us with the poisons and their pockets full. Those giant timber companies will move on to a different forest and leave our streams brown and muddy. Our breadbasket will be a toxic desert dustbowl.

I urge you to take these words to the Legislature and demand that they be taken seriously. The astronomical environmental, social, and economic costs of ignoring them are frightening. This is a famine generating path the Government is determined to follow. This is an extinction level event for our sport fisheries. This is a death knell for Southern Alberta agriculture.

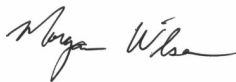
Stop the exploration for and the mining for coal. There is no responsible way to extract it.

Clamp down on clear cut logging and ensure that more trees are planted in those logged areas to help try and anchor that soil. There are better methods, we should be using them.

This is not hyperbolic ranting. This is not just alarmist prophesizing. These are words from a citizen looking in from not so far outside with some skin in the game. Someone who has seen what has happened time and again in jurisdictions when commerce is put ahead of water.

Water is Life. Our province is dead if you kill it.

Sincerely,  
Morgan Wilson,



Nanton, Alberta.

cc/  
Jennifer Handley  
Mayor – Nanton, Alberta

Craig Snodgrass  
Mayor – High River, Alberta

Brent Feyter  
Mayor – Fort Macleod