

**AAMD&C Fall Convention  
Tuesday, November 16, 2010  
Edmonton EXPO at Northlands  
Honourable Ray Danyluk  
Minister of Infrastructure**

**Introduction**

- It's great to be here among people I've served with.
  
- It's also good to see some new faces in the crowd that will no doubt bring new voices and new perspectives to the issues that face us as rural Albertans.
  
- As Minister of Municipal Affairs, I had plenty of opportunities to speak with rural community leaders.
  
- Now as Minister of Infrastructure, more of my time is spent dealing with hospitals, schools and seniors housing.
  
- I've always talked about building strong communities now I'm just doing it in a different way.
  
- As a farmer and rural politician, my mind is always focused on rural matters regardless which portfolio I'm in.

- Being a Minister means I'm in Edmonton a lot, but I return home to rural Alberta each and every week.
- You know where my heart is.
- And you know I don't beat around the bush.
- I've always come here and told it to you straight.
- That is why I asked to come here today to speak with you about recent provincial legislation and its impact on our land.
- Ladies and gentlemen, everyone in this room understands the importance of the land.
- As municipal leaders, you know that good stewardship of the land requires good planning.
- Our government understands it too.
- So does the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties.

- Two weeks ago, the AAMD&C put out a report about the impact on rural municipalities of a potential high speed rail link between Edmonton and Calgary.
- The report doesn't argue in favor of or against the idea of a high speed train.
- It simply talks about potential impacts and the need for good planning.
- Here is what Don Johnson said in the news release:  
*“Rural Alberta is the economic engine that drives the economy of the province... The best way to lessen the impact of a high speed train on rural municipalities is to decide the route early and have clear communication.”*
- I couldn't agree more.
- And it's just as true for major highway projects and transmission lines.
- We need to plan for the future.
- You know it, I know it, Premier Stelmach knows it, and all Albertans know it.

- Our children, our grandchildren, are depending on us.
- We need long-term vision.
  
- And we need to work together to make wise decisions today with our sights set 20, 50 and even 100 years down the road even if those decisions seem difficult, or controversial.

### **Growing Province**

- Everyone in this room knows how much Alberta has grown and changed in our lifetimes.
  
- Rural Alberta is still the economic engine, but it is now fuelled by oil and gas, and tourism, in addition to agriculture and forestry.
  
- This growth and prosperity supports the quality of life that all Albertans enjoy.
  
- It also makes possible our continuing investment in infrastructure roads, schools, hospitals, and municipal programs such as MSI.
  
- And while this growth has brought new opportunities, it has also brought challenges:
  - More trucks on our roads.
  - More quads and snowmobiles criss-crossing our backcountry and our fields.
  - New well-sites and pipelines.

- New homes and businesses needing access to water and power.
- And as Alberta emerges from the recession, this growth is continuing.
- Albertans have asked us, you have asked us, to ensure that as the province grows we protect the values and the way of life on which Alberta has been built.
- Albertans have told us that we have a responsibility to protect our air and water – and our land – for future generations, to enable people and goods to move freely across the province, to make sure the lights stay on, and to foster a strong agricultural sector and rural economy.
- To do this, we must work with Albertans.
- We must consult openly and honestly.
- And we must plan now to meet the infrastructure needs of our province and manage the competing demands on our land.
- We cannot leave future generations with the burden of our failure to act.

- With the legislative tools that were in place, we could not effectively fulfill these responsibilities and protect Albertans, as they expect.
- That is why we introduced three new pieces of legislation:
  1. *The Land Assembly Project Area Act* (formerly Bill 19);
  2. *The Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (formerly Bill 36); and
  3. *The Electric Statutes Amendment Act* (formerly Bill 50).
- I am going to talk a bit about each piece of legislation.
- I will also be at the Ministerial Forum tomorrow and my colleagues and I will be happy to answer more specific questions.
- As well, I would be happy to come out to any of your Zone meetings – or any other meeting – to help answer specific questions.
- You've probably already heard a lot about these Acts.
- Some have been out spreading confusion taking particular sections out of context in order to sow fear and uncertainty.
- You are all successful politicians.

- You know to consider the source of what you are being told and consider the agenda behind it.
- Our government's only agenda is to fulfill our responsibility to plan for Alberta's future.
- We do not seek out criticism.
- I do not wake up in the morning looking for ways to create controversy.
- We would never have brought forward this legislation if we did not truly believe it is crucial to the future of the province.
- Let me be very clear.
- These new laws do not remove any legislative protection of landowners.
- They are the tools that will help protect our way of life as Alberta grows.

### **Land Assembly Project Area Act**

- *The Land Assembly Project Area Act*, formerly Bill 19, clarifies the process for how government acquires land for major long-term infrastructure projects like ring roads and reservoirs.
- This legislation does not provide government with any new powers over private property or remove any legislative protection of landowners.
- This type of long-term land purchase and planning process has always taken place.
- It is how the Edmonton and Calgary ring roads were developed – starting in the 1970s.
- The Edmonton Transportation Utility Corridor includes the Anthony Henday Drive and 18 different pipelines running through it on land gradually purchased by the government and assembled for that purpose.
- This infrastructure would otherwise be scattered over a much wider area, impacting a much higher number of private landowners.
- Albertans have asked us to plan this way – identifying corridors where it is appropriate to minimize the impact on private land.

- I want to emphasize that this legislation does not apply to standalone pipeline or transmission projects.
- In fact, there may not be a need for another major corridor, or a new off-stream storage project, for many years long after I'm out of office... maybe even decades from now.
- This is about having the tools to be ready.
- What is new about this legislation is that government is now required to notify and consult with landowners when a major project of this kind is being considered.
- This requirement did not clearly exist in legislation before.
- It means sharing complete information about what is being proposed, where, and why.
- You know the land.
- You can tell us if a proposed corridor just doesn't make sense, if it doesn't fit with municipal plans, or if there are adjustments that can be made to reduce the impact on the land.

- If there is a project proposed under this legislation some day, we want to work with you to get it right.
- I also want to emphasize that, if land is designated for a future project under this legislation, existing land uses will be allowed to continue.
- For example, a farmer can choose to continue using the land for agricultural purposes until the land is eventually needed for the project.
- If a landowner chooses to sell the land at any time, government is now required to buy it as soon as the request is made.
- If a value cannot be agreed upon, the landowner can request that an independent third party determine the price.
- Some have suggested that this legislation overrides the *Expropriation Act*.
- This is not the case.
- All of the landowner protections in the *Expropriation Act* remain in force.

- When a project is imminent, a landowner can still choose to have their compensation determined through the expropriation process.
- It is true that new developments on property within a project area will need to be approved by the government.
- This type of development restriction is not new.
- And it is consistent with how municipal planning works.
- When land is re-zoned, new development must be consistent with the new zoning.
- If a farmer wanted to build a barn or a shed, this would almost certainly be approved.
- And the farmer would be compensated if the barn or shed had to be moved decades later when the project started.
- But it just doesn't make sense to allow a major industrial or residential development on the site of a future highway.
- That's not the kind of planning Albertans expect of us.

## **Alberta Land Stewardship Act**

- Albertans expect us to plan for major projects.
- They also expect us to plan for the responsible development of our province's resources, while ensuring they can continue to enjoy our natural landscape and our rural way of life.
- This was clearly stated in the years of public, municipal, and stakeholder consultation that went into the Land Use Framework.
- That's where the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, formerly Bill 36, comes in.
- And it is not just about land.
- It is also about water.
- There is an old saying:  
*"Whiskey is for drinking, and water is for fighting over."*
- We have river basins in Southern Alberta where no further water allocations can be made.
- We have international opponents attacking our water use in the oil sands.

- And we have growing numbers of people who use lakes and rivers for recreational purposes.
- Albertans have told us that there is a clear need for regional plans – based around watersheds – to help manage multiple land uses and help coordinate provincial and local planning and decision-making.
- It's about minimizing the impact of development on our land and water.
- I wanted to remind you of what this kind of planning is all about goals that we have been working together on for years.
- Because a lot of claims have been made about specific parts of this legislation and it is easy to lose sight of the big picture.
- The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* is the legislation that enables us to put these regional plans in place.
- We aren't rolling out these plans overnight.
- And we know we can't do it alone.
- We are taking the time to involve the local community and to listen to stakeholders from across the province.

- A good example is the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, which is currently under development.
- A Regional Advisory Council, made up of Albertans who represent a variety of interests, consulted with people living and working in the region.
- Right now, the government is reviewing their recommendations.
- And all Albertans will have another opportunity to provide their input on the plan in January.
- I want to stress that these plans will respect landowner rights.
- Some have suggested that the Alberta Land Stewardship Act allows the government to extinguish land titles.
- Believe me, I would be the first one opposing it if that was the case.
- Land titles cannot be changed.
- Local decisions like subdivision and zoning will still be made at the local level.

- Municipal responsibility for land-use bylaws won't change.
- And individual development decisions will still be made through public hearings of the ERCB, NRCB, and other bodies.
- What has changed is that these decisions will have to align with regional goals.
- Goals that we have all agreed are important for the future of our province.
- There is some strong language in the legislation to make this possible.
- The intent of this is not to replace existing avenues of appeal for development decisions or to change the existing rules for compensation.
- In fact, this legislation expands the possibilities for conservation easements to include protection of agricultural land.
- It is true that regional plans themselves cannot be appealed to the courts.
- These are broad policy decisions that we, as elected officials, have a responsibility to make.

- We have a responsibility to set these priorities in consultation and collaboration with you.
- At the end of the day, your elected officials – not appointed judges or powerful lobby groups and their lawyers – should be accountable for these decisions.
- And we should have the freedom to work with you to refine them as we go.
- We will take the time we need to do that.
- To listen.
- To consult.
- To respect what landowners are telling us.
- And to get these plans right.

## **Electric Statutes Amendment Act**

- None of this planning will matter much if Albertans do not have access to the energy they need to light their homes, and run their businesses and farms.
- Our quality of life and our economy depend on a steady, predictable supply of electricity.
- But we rarely think about how this is made possible.
- Our electricity transmission system is like our highways.
- You need the right size highways for producers to get their goods to consumers.
- And you need a well-connected network so that no corner of the province is left out.
- We know that having a single, two-lane highway to Fort McMurray is not ideal.
- We need to widen Highway 63, and we need to develop alternate routes, like 881.
- Transmission lines are the same in getting electricity to consumers.

- They must be big enough to do the job, and we cannot rely too heavily on a single route.
- With highways, it's easy to see when congestion occurs, or when new paving is needed.
- With transmission lines, this is not so easy to see, but just as important to deal with.
- Alberta's transmission system suffers from congestion and fatigue today.
- It has not been upgraded in decades.
- Our major lines are old, and they are at capacity.
- The newest transmission towers between Edmonton and Calgary are 37 years old.
- They were only designed to last for 40 years.
- These aged and overloaded lines also cause millions of dollars in energy losses every month.

- The bottom line is we've been operating on the edge and things will get worse unless we start to upgrade the system today.
- I know I can't afford to have the water freeze up.
- And many of you can't afford to have your exhaust fans cut out in the middle of winter.
- We need a system we can rely on 100% of the time. Most of the time just isn't good enough.
- We also need a system that allows new sources of power generation to come online – regardless of where they are located.
- We have tremendous potential in Alberta:
  - for co-generation from our oil sands;
  - for bio-energy from our forestry and agricultural sectors;
  - and for wind energy from the south.
- Our electricity market encourages these new sources of generation that benefit all consumers, but only if we have a robust transmission system that can get the power from where it is produced to where it is needed.
- And that is what new transmission is all about: Alberta consumers.

- New transmission is not for export.
- Alberta is a net importer of power, and our connections with B.C. and Saskatchewan are already at full capacity.
- We do export power through these provinces at certain times of the day.
- Those who import our power pay for the cost of transmission, just as we do when we import power.
- Albertans do not pay the cost of transmission used for export, and they will not do so in the future.
- The *Electric Statutes Amendment Act*, formerly Bill 50, approved the need for four new transmission lines.
- This is critical infrastructure needed for Albertans.
- Two points:
  - First, this is the same as government determining the need for new roads, hospitals or other infrastructure.

- Second, the process for determining the routes for new transmission lines has not changed.
- The Alberta Utilities Commission continues to hold public hearings to decide where lines will go.
- Landowners will continue to have their say about the impact transmission facilities will have.
- It's crucial that we work closely with landowners to find solutions.
- We need to work with landowners to find approaches that are the least disruptive like taking a line along a property's edge instead of through the middle or adjusting the path of a line so it doesn't interfere with a windbreak.
- Landowners continue to have the right to fair compensation, based on market value, for transmission facilities located on their property.
- I know that does not make it any easier for those who will be directly affected.
- When I started farming, if a utility company had wanted to build power lines on my land, I would have mostly been concerned about compensation.

- I would have maneuvered my machinery around the power poles without too much trouble.
- Today, it's a different story.
- I used to have a 12-foot cultivator, now I use a 90-foot sprayer.
- There's no way it can weave between power poles.
- I basically would have to give up all the crop in between.
- Compensation wouldn't make up for the extra time and trouble.
- It's about adverse effect and inconvenience, more than compensation.
- The reason I tell you this is because good land-use planning has never been more important.
- I can't afford to have many small power lines crossing my property.
- Provincially, it makes more sense to have a few well-planned transmission projects that will meet our long term need.
- It's better for farmers.

- It's better for rural municipalities.
- And it's better for the province as a whole.
- We do not want landowners to have to go through this again every 10 or 15 years.
- We need to be futurists.
- Fifty years ago, who would have predicted the type of farm machinery we have today?
- That's why we need to plan carefully and wisely today.
- And that's what corridors are about.
- Some leaders would have you believe that the solution is to build distributed generation and many small transmission lines.
- This is not the suggestion of someone who works the land, of someone who lives on the land, of someone who understands the land.
- Those of you who know the land know the best solution is not to put a bunch of small towers on many people's land.

- The best solution is have fewer towers on fewer people's land and to make sure that when we build a line it will meet the need for decades to come.
- We can't afford to have new highways and power lines criss-crossing the province and creating major issues for farmers and landowners.
- We need well-planned corridors to minimize land use and landowner impacts.
- The infrastructure Alberta will need in the future must be planned today so we lessen the impact on landowners as much as possible.
- All of us will reap the benefits of that kind of proactive, coordinated approach.

### **Conclusion**

- Ladies and gentlemen, these three pieces of legislation are the tools that will allow us to plan for the growth that is going to happen.
- That is occurring right now.

- That Alberta must be ready for.
- As a government, we have understood and protected Alberta's rural way of life for the past 40 years.
- And we will continue to do so.
- If anyone is telling you otherwise, think about their motivation and where they are coming from.
- As most of you know, I have been a farmer for many years.
- When I first started farming, my grandfather took me for a walk.
- He told me:

*“You can fool your neighbours, you can fool your friends, but you can't fool the land. Treat it with respect and value and it will take care of you for the rest of your life.”*
- I took that to heart.
- The stewardship of the land is a responsibility that weighs heavily on me and I know it does on you too, because we will pass our land on to our descendants.

- Our land is our heritage.
- Our land is our legacy.
- Our land is our identity.
- Many, many of my colleagues are rural landowners too.
- More than 30 MLAs in our Caucus are rural landowners.
- Over half of them are actively farming.
- They feel the same way.
- So does our Premier.
- A few weeks ago, Premier Stelmach said something that really stuck with me.
- He said that as Albertans,  
*"We do not fear the future and plan for retreat. We look forward to the future and prepare for success."*
- That is exactly what this legislation is about.

- And that is what our government is committed to.
- Meeting the future needs of our province and ensuring a strong future for our rural way of life.
- Thank you.