



Not convinced by MLA's stance

Letter to the Editor

Mar 20, 2012 06:00 am

Re: "Setting the record straight on property rights" by MLA Ray Danyluk in the Lac La Biche Post and St. Paul Journal March 13.

Having read your comments on Bills 6, 24, 36 and 50 in the Lac La Biche Post on March 13, it is difficult for me to understand if you have actually read the bills.

Bill 24 is a bill that was passed to move ahead with the \$2B Carbon Capture program. When the government realized that landholders owned the space (pores) that the CO₂ would have to be pumped into, they created this law to declare themselves to be the owner of this space on all property, including private land. Normally this would be subject to expropriation law but legal wording in the bill stated that no court can find this action to be an appropriation and no compensation was required.

Bill 36 is the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. This Act gives the Cabinet complete authority to make decisions affecting all existing land rights. This means the Cabinet, not the government, or the legislature, control all grazing rights, water licenses, development rights, mineral extraction rights, timber harvest rights, oil and gas rights, etc. Section 11 of this Act clearly states that the Cabinet can rescind these rights whenever and for whatever reason the Cabinet decides. It restricts the right to compensation and several sections of the Act are designed to completely remove a landowner's right to the courts. It is the most complete and absolute power you could see put into legal language. It also enables the Cabinet to set social, economic and environmental policies, targets and outcomes for all activities on all land in Alberta, including yours Mr. Danyluk. It is unprecedented in Western Democracies. The Cabinet has the exclusive power to fundamentally change what landowners can do with their land.

Bill 50 requires new transmission lines to be built and paid for by Albertans. It allows for the transmission companies (Altalink, Atco, etc.) to own the very lines we paid them to build. Additionally, it gives transmission companies incentives to overbuild transmission lines because they can charge us 100 per cent of the expenses at cost plus a profit and they don't need to spend a red cent.

Previously Alberta had checks and balances in the form of the Alberta Utilities Commission. No more. Bill 50 gives the Cabinet sole decision making power to decide whether Albertans

need new multi-billion power lines. They approved a \$16.7B expenditure transmission infrastructure without any comprehensive needs assessments or cost benefit analysis. Major Alberta industries and big power consumers, through limited public consultation, pleaded with the Cabinet saying that the electrical costs penalties will cause relocations to provinces such as Saskatchewan and BC. Alison Redford ignored them and stated that they would be going ahead. This expenditure is greater than the total Alberta Health budget for an entire year. If you want to understand the enormity of this electrical transmission overbuild, visualize the four lane highway between Calgary and Edmonton. By comparison it would be the equivalent of a 32 lane highway. Be prepared for massive power rate increases.

To add to misinformation you are perpetuating, the government introduced Bill 6: the creation of a Property Rights Advocate. The role of this individual will be to advise us that the above bills are correct in law and the only appeal is to a cabinet minister and the cabinet. This person will not have any power to change law.

Your party campaigned on ‘Openness and Transparency’! An open and transparent response should be forthcoming.

Roger Harbord

Constituent of Lac La Biche – St Paul – Two Hills

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