



October 22, 2009

Mr. Bill Werry  
Deputy Minister  
Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor Commerce Place  
10155 – 102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L6

Dear Bill:

Thank you for the opportunity for the sport community to provide input to the Recreation Policy during the meetings of October 14 and 15, 2009. We offer some generic concerns while the meeting participants offered many specific areas where sport could be included in the policy framework document that was discussed. This letter is written to seek your comments on two related issues – the Recreation Policy and the renewal of the Alberta Sport Plan.

With respect to the Recreation Policy, there is disappointment with the absence of any meaningful reference to sport. Your letter of January 9, 2009 states that “the development of an over-arching Recreation Policy is one which will take into account the full continuum of recreation and physical activity including active living, community recreation, sport participation and high performance sport”. In our view, the last two items have been neglected in the present Recreation Policy.

Sport is referenced in the discussion document on just two occasions. There are details and specifics on many of the activities related to recreation and physical literacy but it is, essentially, silent on sport. There is no reference to key elements required for a successful sport system, one that contributes significantly to “the greater good” and one that can positively impact the government’s agenda and “the way forward”. Investment is needed in many areas such as: coaching, ASDCs, sport science/sport medicine services, research/innovation, capacity building, event hosting, and athlete support etc. All these need to be addressed in the present Recreation Policy or in a new and separate Sport Policy.

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It is our belief that we need to ensure the Recreation Policy addresses sport within a continuum and that it remains at a sufficiently high level to allow for reinvestment strategies pertaining to the Alberta Sport Plan. It is encouraging that the Alberta Sport Plan has been used as a guideline for investment priorities in recent years and we encourage a continuance of this until a new plan is developed in the near future.

A second concern is that based on the limited information that has been circulated about the Recreation Policy, we believe that the policy is too “operational”. Our limited experience with policy development suggests that a policy should address an issue (resolve a problem) and then programming outcomes should inform the policy. The policy should trigger programming and thus investment of resources in the programming elements. As written, there is no place for sport to contribute to the policy outcomes.

Alberta could and should be the pre eminent province for sport. We need to work together to ensure this happens. As we collectively address the cost pressures on athletes/coaches and the sport system as well as the provincial budget, we believe there are ways to work together. The system can be more coordinated, aligned and integrated. We must seek effective and efficient systems and processes to garner maximum impact both in the short and long term.

A third concern is that a corporate trend appears to suggest that many sport friendly corporations are getting out of high profile events and investing more at the community/grass roots level. The draft Recreational Policy also appears to be shutting sport out of the government support process.

A final issue is that specific to the Alberta Sport Plan, correspondence from the Conservative Party (Randy Dawson, February 28, 2008) stated that “a Progressive Conservative government would expect to have another process in place before 2010...” Similarly, correspondence from yourself (September 3, 2008) stated that “over the next year we will be examining and exploring the alternatives for an updated plan reaching past 2010”. We hope that this promise is still forthcoming and, as always, we are committed to assisting with the further enhancement of sport in Alberta.

Please indicate the timelines and process for the Albert Sport Plan renewal.

Sincerely,

Dale Henwood  
Chair  
Board of Directors, Sport Alberta

c. Hon. Cindy Ady

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