
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

PROVINCE HELPS PEACE REGION FARMS RETAIN STATUS

VICTORIA – The Province has taken action to ensure that no farmers in the Peace River region will lose their farm status as a result of three straight years of drought conditions, announced Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

“We are waiving farm income and production requirements for the 2011 property assessment roll to offset the impact of the prolonged drought the region has been experiencing,” said Cadieux. “We want to make sure farmers are not unduly burdened with higher taxation levels associated with residential land as compared to farm land.”

Under normal circumstances, properties must produce a certain amount of agricultural revenue to maintain farm status. In this case, severe drought has prevented some Peace River region farmers from earning this revenue.

In response, the Province has invoked section 6.1 of the standards for classification of land as a farm regulation to allow affected farmers to retain farm status for their properties, even if they have not met the income criteria for farm classification. Without this measure, their land would be assessed as residential property, which has a higher taxable value.

“It’s important that government support farmers in the Peace in the midst of this drought,” said Ben Stewart, Minister of Agriculture. “This temporary waiver of income requirements is the right thing to do and will give farmers the confidence that government is paying attention to how they have been impacted.”

Section 6.1 of the standards for classification of land as a farm regulation provides authority to cabinet to temporarily suspend production and income requirements for farm classification under exceptional circumstances. The intent of this section is to provide relief for the agriculture industry and commodity groups impacted by widespread situations such as the avian flu epidemic, which resulted in the culling of entire production bird flocks.

Farmers in the Peace River region who have lost their farm classification should contact BC Assessment’s Prince George regional office to ensure the farm status on their land is not affected.

The Prince George office is responsible for farm assessments in the North region and can be reached at 1 800 757-9766 or 250 562-7215, or at: princegeorge@bcassessment.ca

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