



Reference: 41316

June 04, 2024

VIA EMAIL: nancylwilkin@gmail.com; chiefharrynyce@gmail.com

Chief Harry Nyce Sr., Co-chair and
Nancy Wilkin, Co-chair
Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council

Dear Chief Nyce Sr. and Nancy Wilkin:

Thank you for your letter of April 2, 2024, regarding the risk of transmission of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (M.ovi) to wild sheep.

I appreciate the recommendations provided to help respond to the risk of transmission of M.ovi between domestic and wild sheep. These suggestions are valued contributions to the collaborative work of the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) with Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF), who administer the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* and *Animal Health Act*.

I understand your interest in addressing this matter ahead of the *Wildlife Act* Review, as changes to the *Wildlife Act* are not expected to be completed until 2026. In the interim, we are working to advance policy reforms and take management actions to reduce the risk of transmission and prevalence of the disease. WLRS staff meet regularly with AF staff to make progress on recommendations made by the M.ovi Strategic Advisory group in 2022. The advice of the Minister's Wildlife Advisory Council complements these previous recommendations and will help focus and amplify actions.

WLRS staff also regularly meet with counterparts in other jurisdictions faced with wild/domestic sheep interface issues, to learn from their experiences. Of note, conversations related to the alignment of regulations and adoption best practices are ongoing through membership with Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), a network that provides executive level coordination across jurisdictions. Staff are actively engaged in both the Wild Sheep Initiative (WSI) and Wildlife Health Committee (WHC). More information can be found here: [Wild Sheep Initiative – WAFWA](#).

In addition to the *Wildlife Act* Review, the province is advancing the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework. To support implementation of the Framework, new legislation

Chief Nyce Sr, Nancy Wilkin, Co- Chair

and amendments to existing legislation will be considered. Collectively, these legislative initiatives and on-the-ground actions underway for wild sheep are a continued priority.

Again, thank you for sharing your recommendations, as well as the recent order from the Yukon, and your continued support of wildlife stewardship and management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Cullen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nathan" and the last name "Cullen" clearly distinguishable.

Nathan Cullen
Minister

pc: Eric Kristianson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Lori Halls, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Richard Elliott, Senior Executive Director, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

David Muter, Assistant Deputy Minister, Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Jennifer Psyllakis, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Stewardship Division, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Logan Wenham, Executive Director, Wildlife, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Michael Burwash, Associate Director Wildlife, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Jen Walker, Director, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Avril Nagel, Manager, Together for Wildlife Implementation

Kyle Stelter, Wild Sheep Society of BC

Okanagan Nation Alliance