



Report Number: C2021-0143

URGENT NOTICE OF MOTION

RE: Open-Pit Coal Mining in the Rocky Mountain Eastern Slopes

Sponsoring Councillor(s): Diane Colley-Urquhart

Meeting Date: 2021 January 18

CITY OF CALGARY

RECEIVED

IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

JAN 18 2021

13.1 C2021-0143

ITEM:

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CITY CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS:

1. A 1976 policy brought in by Peter Lougheed's government after years of work and public consultation forbid open-pit coal mines and banned any mining at all in the most environmentally sensitive areas;
2. Albertans overwhelmingly said the eastern slopes should be devoted to watershed protection, recreation and tourism;
3. The current Government of Alberta has rescinded a 45 year old coal-mining policy protecting the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains to allow open-pit coal mining without public consultation;
4. The GOA has also reopened water allocation agreements with the water heavily allocated raising questions about water quality and the potential of ecological degradation;
5. The eastern slopes are the source of three major rivers – the Red Deer, the Oldman and the South Saskatchewan that southern Alberta depends on for drinking water, irrigation and industry;
6. The GOA has sold leases on about 1.4 million hectares of land for coal exploration since the policy was revoked, and at least one provincial recreation area is partly covered by a coal lease with four others surrounded by them;
7. This week nine interveners including First Nations, ranchers, some municipal officials and environmentalists in a request for a judicial review, will try to persuade a judge to have the GOA revisit its decision to open one of the most important environmentally sensitive areas to open-pit coal mining;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT before Council can take an informed position and decision on this matter:

- a) Administration and other experts be requested to make a presentation at the SPC on Utilities and Corporates Services no later than June 2021 on the Government of Alberta's decision to rescind the 1976 coal-mining policy that had protected the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains – and the headwaters that flow from them, and,
- b) Administration bring forward options for Council consideration.