



Guidelines for writing to your Member of the Legislative Assembly

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected to represent the interests of constituents like you (people who live in the riding they represent.) Part of their job is to listen to their constituents and present your interests and concerns to the legislature.

Writing to your MLA is an effective way to bring outstanding concerns to your MLA's attention and ask for the elected representative's assistance in resolving the issue.

Following are some important guidelines for writing to your MLA regarding recent changes to BC's *Wildlife Allocation Policy*.

Key Points to Remember When Writing Your MLA:

Keep it Brief – Limit letters to one page covering one issue. Long rants will undermine your credibility and are often ignored. Be courteous and informative in your communication.

Identify Yourself – Begin with an introduction of yourself using a simple statement such as ... *As a proud BC resident and avid hunter ... As a constituent of (specify riding)... I have been a resident of (city/town) for XX years...* Go on to state the purpose of the letter referring to your opposition of planned changes to BC's *Wildlife Allocation Policy*.

Get to the Point – Follow your introduction with a brief statement of why you oppose the announced changes to BC's *Wildlife Allocation Policy*. A few strong, well-thought-out arguments are much more effective than a laundry list of reasons opposing the new policy. Whenever possible, use bullet points to outline your arguments.

Include a Personal Story – Personalize the letter by including examples of how the revised policy might impact or inconvenience you and your family. Include specific facts about your area and local anecdotes to help your MLA understand why your position is important and how this new policy impacts you and other constituents.

The "Ask" – Be specific about what you are asking the MLA to do, i.e. *"Rescind the policy change"...* *"Tell the Premier..."* *"Ask for a meeting to discuss the issue,"* etc. Request a response clarifying the MLA's position on this issue. Thank the MLA for his or her support and offer to address any questions that he or she might have. Be sure to include your contact information (full address and postal code), and sign the letter.

Don't:

- Don't threaten, use abusive language or derogatory terms.
- Don't use specialized language, technical terms or acronyms.
- Don't turn your letter into an essay
- Don't jump from topic to topic. Stick to one issue and make your case clearly and concisely.

How do I find out who my MLA is?

Visit <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>



Some suggestions about the content of the letter:

Wildlife Allocation Policy change results in significant hardship to families who depend on hunting for a healthy diet. An increasing number of British Columbians depend on hunting as a sustainable, healthy food source. This new policy essentially takes food off their table, inhibiting their ability to fill their freezers and feed their families, particularly in areas of the province affected by the downturn in local resource industries.

Policy is inconsistent with standard practices in Canada and the U.S. Most jurisdictions across North America give foreign hunters five to ten percent of the wild game allocation. BC's new policy gives foreign hunters 25 percent of moose and elk and 40 percent of wild mountain sheep, bear and mountain goat, which is unprecedented in North America. In order to keep the wildlife harvest sustainable, the number of tags offered to resident hunters by lottery in the Limited Entry Hunting Draw will be significantly reduced.

No economic justification for giving foreign sport hunters a larger share of hunting permits. The BC government's decision to give the commercial hunting industry preference over the needs of resident BC hunters is contrary to the public interest. Over the last ten years, the number of BC hunters has grown by 20 percent, increasing from 84,000 to over 102,000. Over the same period, the number of foreign trophy hunters coming to BC has dropped from 6,500 to 4,500, a decline of 30 percent. BC resident hunters spend over \$230 million a year in local communities on hunting-related activities and contribute \$9 million a year towards conservation work through license fees. It simply doesn't make any economic sense to give foreign sport hunters a larger share of hunting permits at the expense of resident hunters.

Government should honour the 2007 Wildlife Allocation Policy. Wildlife is a public resource in British Columbia and the province's MLAs should be acting in the best interest of the public – the people who elected them. The Premier and the Province should rescind the most recent changes to the *Wildlife Allocation Policy* and legislate a 90/10 wildlife split between residents and guide outfitters consistent with what is done in other jurisdictions.

See the next page for a sample letter.



Sample Letter to MLA

The following template letter to an MLA is for reference purposes only. Please do not send out this form letter word-for-word. Use your own language and personal stories to let MLAs know why they should rescind the new BC Wildlife Allocation Policy.

(Month) (Day) (Year)

The Honourable (First Name) (Last Name)
MLA (Specify Riding)
(Address)

Re: (State the Topic, i.e. Opposition to Changes to BC's Wildlife Allocation Policy.)

Dear (Salutation) (Last Name):

As your constituent, I am writing to express my extreme opposition to the recently announced changes to BC's Wildlife Allocation Policy announced by Steve Thompson, Minister of Forestry, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, which gives a larger share of hunting permits to foreign sport hunters at the expense of BC resident hunters, many of whom rely on hunting to help feed their families.

This new policy is clearly contrary to the public interest and there is absolutely no economic justification for giving foreign sport hunters a larger share of hunting permits. The numbers speak for themselves. Over the last ten years, the number of BC hunters has grown by 20 percent, increasing from 84,000 to over 102,000. Over the same period, the number of foreign trophy hunters coming to BC, represented by 210 guide outfitters, has dropped from 6,500 to 4,500, a decline of 30 percent.

This is clearly a case of the Province putting the interests of the commercial hunting industry ahead of the legitimate needs of BC residents. This new policy gives foreign hunters 25 percent of moose and elk and 40 percent of wild mountain sheep, bear and mountain goat, which is unprecedented in North America. In order to keep the wildlife harvest sustainable, the number of tags offered to resident hunters by lottery in the Limited Entry Hunting Draw will be significantly reduced, resulting in considerable hardship for many local families.

(ADD LOCAL ANECDOTE OR PERSONAL INFORMATION)

I fail to see the logic in the Province giving preferential treatment to 210 guide outfitters catering to foreign trophy hunters rather than supporting the more than 100,000 resident hunters who spend over \$230 million per year in local communities on hunting-related activities and contribute \$9 million per year towards conservation work through license fees.

I strongly encourage you to remind Minister Steve Thomson and Premier Christy Clark that BC Wildlife is a public resource and not for sale, and encourage them to rescind announced changes to BC's Wildlife Allocation Policy in favour of a fair wildlife hunting allocation with 90 percent going to resident hunters and 10 percent going to foreign sport hunters and the outfitters who guide them.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

(Insert Name), (City/Town)