PREDA
PEACE REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Board of Directors Meeting
1:00PM to 4:00PM
MINUTES

Date: Thursday, September 3rd **Location:** Grande Cache Hotel, MD of Greenview #16

Directives from PREDA Membership Meeting – Friday, September 4th, 2026

Participating Members (v = Video)			
Big Lakes County V	Richard Mifflin - Councilor	Town of Falher	Donna Buchinski - Mayor
County of Northern Lights V	Terry Ungarian - Reeve	Town of Grimshaw	Colleen Sklapsky – Dep. Mayor
MD of Fairview	John Przybylski - Deputy Reeve	Town of Sexsmith	Ken Hildebrand - Councilor
MD of Greenview	Tom Burton - Deputy Reeve	Village of Berwyn	Brian Carreau - Deputy Mayor
MD of Opportunity	Brendan Powell – Deputy Reeve	Village of Nampa	Perry Skrlik - Deputy Mayor
MD of Peace	Sandra Eastman - Deputy Reeve	Com. Futures-PC V	Sherry Crawford - GM
MD of Smoky River	Gilles Roy - Deputy Reeve	Com. Futures-PC	Carolyn Kolebaba – Board
MD of Spirit River	Shelley Rozecki - Councilor		

Directive 1: That the Board of Directors proceed with a *Letter of Advocacy* directly to Premier Danielle Smith on behalf of the PREDA membership to reconsider complete withdrawal of financial support and collaboration with PREDA. Moved By: J. Przybylski – MD of Fairview **Carried**

Directive 2: That the Board of Directors submit a *Letter of Advocacy* directly to Premier Danielle Smith identifying the frustration among its membership with the loss of the Northern Alberta Development Council's northern advocacy, political influence, regional engagement, and research resources.
Moved By: C. Sklapsky – Town of Grimshaw **Carried**

Action: Administration will draft above referenced Letter for review / approval of the Board of Directors. CC shall be to AB Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance/ Treasury Board, Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade, & Immigration, all Northern MLAs, REDI Chair, PREDA Membership

Directive 3: Letter of Advocacy to Hon. Brian Jean – Minister of Energy that Coal be classified as a critical mineral reiterating the information provided by Robin Campbell; President of the Canada Coal Association. Moved By: S. Rozecki – MD of sprit River **Carried**

Action: Administration will draft above referenced Letter for review / approval of the Board of Directors. CC shall be to AB Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance/ Treasury Board, Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade, & Immigration, all Northern MLAs, REDI Chair, PREDA Membership

Directive 4: PREDA December 4th 2026 Membership meeting shall be in person with video/telephone options available. Location to be determined. Moved By: T. Ungarian **Carried**

Action: Presentations as per September 4th, 2026 membership agenda will be posted to PREDA website :

1) What's Happening? Larry Gibson - Manager of Economic Development, MD of Greenview
2) Coal as a Critical Element; Robin Campbell; President Canadian Coal Association
3) The Dissolution of Grande Cache; Stacey Wabick- CAO, MD of Greenview

draft

The Honourable Danielle Smith - Premier of Alberta
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

October 9th, 2026

Re: The Decline of Regional Economic Development Alliances

Dear Premier Smith,

Economic development is based on return on investment (ROI). What constitutes ROI is starkly different in larger centres than in rural Alberta. While larger municipalities can base their ROI on the attraction and expansion of multimillion dollar projects, smaller rural municipalities, base theirs on retaining what few economic drivers they have left in their communities.

Rural Alberta, by all statistics, is dying. The Peace Region Economic Development Alliance, (PREDA), which consists of 25 municipalities, has seen a sharp decline in population, the number of commercial and industrial businesses, and services provided by both the federal and provincial governments.

PREDA's municipalities have relied on the expertise, services and collaboration provided by their membership in the regional alliance. PREDA provides valuable and informative symposiums; subscriptions to research tools many municipalities could not afford on their own; one-on-one consultations with municipal councils throughout the region; and conducts regional research projects - which were once the foray of the Northern Alberta Development Council,

There are 9 Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) in Alberta (cc'd). The majority membership consists of villages, small towns and MDs. Most of these municipalities lack the financial resources to an employ an Economic Development Officer; let alone maintain an economic development department.

The government's withdrawal, both financial and collaboratively, from the alliances will likely result in the closure of PREDA. With the closure of the alliance, our municipalities will be reliant on one government employee covering one quarter of the province's land mass to assist in municipal economic needs. While many northern municipalities have become used to the closure of government offices such as the Northern Alberta Development Council and Agricultural Financial Services; the lack of emergency room care; and the closure of schools, the loss of PREDA will leave many municipalities without economic development support. Fifteen years ago more than 20 government employees populated this region to support rural economic development. As of April 2027, there will be one.

Further we must address the recent requirement of the Ministry of Jobs, Economy, Trade, and Immigration that all REDAs complete financial Audits; (as opposed to Compilations or Reviews) within the context of a maximum grant of $125,000. Financial audits cost approximately $15,000 per year, which is more than 10% of our operating budget. Accountants have advised us that this is unheard of, noting that audits are typically required for budgets exceeding $500,000. This $15,000 could have been better spent doing projects for small municipalities.

Rural Alberta is the backbone of the Province of Alberta. If it does well the province does well. We are asking you to please reconsider the future of rural Alberta and reinstate, in some form, a viable financial framework to ensure alliances can continue to operate in rural Alberta. With alliances stability, they can continue to lead to a successful Alberta.

PREDA's Board of Directors would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this issue, either alone or in conjunction with other REDA Board of Directors. We believe this is an urgent issue that will impact many small urbans and rural municipalities. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Tom R Burton

Tom Burton – Municipal District of Greenview #16
Chair - Peace Region Economic Development Alliance

cc: Hon. Mike Ellis — Calgary-West
Deputy Premier; Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services

Hon. Jason Nixon — Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
President of Treasury Board; Minister of Finance

Hon. Joseph Schow — Cardston-Siksika
Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration; Government House Leader

Northern MLAs Hon. Todd Loewen — Central Peace-Notley
Minister of Forestry and Parks

Hon. Dan Williams — Peace River
Minister of Municipal Affairs; Deputy Government House Leader

Hon. Brian M. Jean — Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche
Minister of Energy and Minerals

Hon. Martin Long – West Yellowhead
Minister of Infrastructure

MLA Tany Yao – Fort McMurray – Wood Buffalo
Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

MLA Nolan Dyck - Grande Prairie
Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous and Rural Policing

MLA Ron Wiebe - Grande Prairie-Wapiti
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (North)

MLA Scott Sinclair - Lesser Slave Lake

REDA Board of Directors Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance; Battle River Alliance for Economic Development; Central Alberta Economic Partnership; Grizzly Regional Economic Alliance; Northeast Alberta Information Hub; Palliser Economic Partnership; Regional Economic Development Initiative Northwest Alberta; SouthGrow Regional Initiative

PREDA Membership – See Attached

Letter to the Premier of Alberta RE: Decline of Regional Economic Development Alliances

Attachment - PREDA Membership List

Peace Region Economic Development Alliance	
2026-2027 Membership	
Municipal	Big Lakes County
Municipal	Birch Hills County
Municipal	Clear Hills County
Municipal	County of Grande Prairie
Municipal	County of Northern Lights
Municipal	MD of Fairview #136
Municipal	MD of Greenview #16
Municipal	MD of Opportunity #17
Municipal	MD of Peace #135
Municipal	MD of Smoky River #130
Municipal	MD of Spirit River #133
Municipal	Northern Sunrise County
Municipal	Saddle Hills County
Municipal	Town of Fairview
Municipal	Town of Falher
Municipal	Town of Grimshaw
Municipal	Town of McLennan
Municipal	Town of Sexsmith
Municipal	Town of Spirit River
Municipal	Town of Valleyview
Municipal	Village of Berwyn
Municipal	Village of Nampa
Non-Municipal	Community Futures-Grande Prairie & District
Non-Municipal	Community Futures-Peace Country
Non-Municipal	Grande Prairie Regional Airport
Non-Municipal	Northern Lakes College
Non-Municipal	Northwestern Polytechnic
Non-Municipal	Lac Cardinal Regional Economic Development
Non-Municipal	Chamber of Commerce - Grande Prairie & District
Non-Municipal	Chamber of Commerce - Peace River & District
Non-Municipal	Careers Next Generation
Non-Municipal	Mighty Peace Tourism
Non-Municipal	MacKenzie Municipal Services Agency
Non-Municipal	Move-Up Magazine

PREDA
PEACE REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

The Honourable Danielle Smith
Premier of Alberta - Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

October 9th, 2026

Re: The Decline of the Northern Alberta Development Council

Dear Premier Smith,

I am writing you on behalf of the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance's (PREDA) 25 member municipalities to request a return to sufficient funding and purpose for the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC).

NADC was established by the provincial government in 1963 to address the economic and social differential that existed between northern Alberta and the balance of the Province. NADC played an integral role in assisting northern communities while providing a valuable communication link between the north and the government.

Today that economic and social gap has widened. Emergency room closures, threats to fixed wing medivac services, the decline in commercial air services, bus services, closures of provincial offices, closures of schools, banks, and industry have increased and continue. With that we have seen a decline in population in more than 90 per cent of our municipalities.

While there is a small number of larger opportunities such as nuclear and AI centers, their impact will do little to resolve the ever-increasing challenges our municipalities are facing and also limited to a handful of selected municipalities.

The NADC played a vital role in gathering information from northern municipalities and communicating issues and opportunities with government of Alberta staff and elected officials. Additionally, NADC provided these municipalities access to multiple research experts to work with to resolve issues and attract industry.

The attached information package highlights the major decline of NADC. Municipalities must now vie for limited grant funding to complete research vital to their existence. Further with the decline in industry and the dwindling population, municipalities lack the funds required to apply for grants, and the staff to complete applications.

Northern municipalities have attempted to replace NADC by creating new groups to address various issues, however they lack the expertise and sufficient funds to attract and retain staff to operate. The north is being left out of the economic recovery the province is having.

While the NADC has done roundtables and produced a "What we heard" document, it has resulted in no action. We request a meeting with you to discuss opportunities to return NADC to its intended purpose. It is needed now, if not more, than in 1963.

Sincerely,



Tom Burton – Municipal District of Greenview #16
Chair - Peace Region Economic Development

Attachments:

A) Decline of the Northern Alberta Development Council - Executive Summary for Premier Smith
B) Decline of the Northern Alberta Development Council – Detailed

CC: Hon. Mike Ellis — Calgary-West
Deputy Premier; Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services

Hon. Jason Nixon — Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
President of Treasury Board; Minister of Finance

Hon. Joseph Schow — Cardston-Siksika
Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration; Government House Leader

Northern MLAs

Hon. Todd Loewen Central Peace-Notley; Minister of Forestry and Parks

Hon. Dan Williams Peace River; Minister of Municipal Affairs; Deputy Government House Leader

Hon. Brian M. Jean Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche; Minister of Energy and Minerals

Hon. Martin Long West Yellowhead; Minister of Infrastructure

MLA Tany Yao Fort McMurray – Wood Buffalo; Parl. Secretary for Small Business and Northern Development

MLA Nolan Dyck Grande Prairie; Parl. Secretary for Indigenous and Rural Policing

MLA Ron Wiebe Grande Prairie-Wapiti; Parl. Secretary for Rural Health (North)

MLA Scott Sinclair - Lesser Slave Lake

Lisa Wardley Mackenzie County; Chair – Regional Economic Development Initiative Northwest Alberta (REDI)

PREDA Membership – See Attached

Letter to the Premier of Alberta RE: Decline of Northern Alberta Development Council

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Attachment A: Restoring the Northern Alberta Development Council

Executive Summary for the Premier of Alberta

We ask the Government of Alberta to restore the Northern Alberta Development Council's research, regional engagement and strategic planning capacity, and give it a funded role in advancing northern infrastructure. A renewed NADC can help position Alberta as a gateway to the North and Arctic, supporting economic development, resilient supply chains and Canada's security and sovereignty objectives.

What has been reduced?

The accompanying document describes the erosion of an organization that once provided northern municipalities with dedicated research, direct provincial connections and regional coordination. It reports approximately 15 staff before 2020, compared with an estimated four more recently, including a part-time executive director. It also describes the relocation of executive leadership from Peace River to Edmonton and a diminished presence in northern communities.

NADC's earlier work included road and rail transportation, utility corridors, agricultural opportunities, workforce needs, housing, energy and water research. It supported northern elected leaders, post-secondary collaboration and intergovernmental forums. The document describes a substantial loss of this research and convening capacity, leaving communities with less support to assess shared challenges and advance regional priorities.

Why rebuilding NADC matters.

Alberta should develop its potential as a practical gateway to the North and Arctic. Roads, rail connections, airports, energy systems and communications infrastructure can serve northern communities and industry while supporting emergency response, reliable supply routes and national security. Interest in nuclear energy and AI development also calls for coordinated assessment of electricity supply, transmission, water and workforce needs.

NADC should lead this regional research, bringing municipal, Indigenous, provincial, territorial and federal partners together with industry. Its studies should assess feasibility, costs, cumulative impacts and community benefits to inform investment decisions. Defence responsibilities would remain federal.

What we ask the Premier to support:

- **Restore stable capacity.** Provide sustained funding and dedicated **northern-based** research staff, with strong leadership and an active presence in the region, including the position of Executive Director.
- **Lead northern infrastructure and energy research.** Lead coordinated studies of nuclear energy, small modular reactors, AI data centre electricity demand and grid capacity, alongside road and rail connections to the North and Arctic.
- **Rebuild northern partnerships.** Renew regular engagement with municipalities, Indigenous governments, regional alliances, industry and northern post-secondary institutions.
- **Set clear deliverables.** Require a public work plan, prioritized studies and annual reporting showing how research advances investment decisions and northern prosperity.

Restoring the Northern Alberta Development Council is an investment in Alberta's ability to shape northern development, grow the northern economy and contribute to Canada's long-term security.

PREDA
PEACE REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Honourable Brian Jean – Minister of Energy and Minerals
307 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

October 9th, 2026

Re: Advocacy to Classify Coal as a Critical Mineral

Honorable Minister Jean,

The most recent meeting of the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance (PREDA) was held in Grande Cache located within the Municipal District of Greenview #16 on September 4, 2026.

Not surprising the **Coal Industry** was on our agenda as the "raison d'etre" for Grande Cache is historically dependent on **Coal** mining. Mr. Robin Campbell; President of the Coal Association of Canada and Secretary to a Board of Directors which represent national & international coal mining companies; presented in-person to the members of PREDA at our meeting.

During PREDA's in-house research it was noticed that **Coal** appears to an after-thought when marketing Alberta's superior minerals. Even the Alberta Government's Minister of Energy and Minerals website states "Minerals and **Coal**". As you are aware Alberta produces superior **Coal** for both electricity production (thermal coal) and steel production (metallurgical; the type mined in Grande Cache).

PREDA advocates that the "and **Coal**" does a "branding in-justice" to the true value of our **Coal Industry** not only in Alberta but also across Canada and global export prices. Furthermore, PREDA advocates that not only should Alberta **Coal** be classified as a mineral; PREDA advocates that Alberta **Coal** should be catapulted as a **critical mineral.**

PREDA advocates that classifying **Coal** as a critical mineral reflects the real contribution of **Coal** across a variety of industrial sectors, such as the auto-industry, the aerospace industry, medical diagnostics, and military equipment.

Catapulting Alberta's **Coal** as a critical mineral will position our **Coal** at the highest return on investment as the global markets respond to increasing demands for electricity, sector specific use, and mega-project infrastructure.

We appreciate your attention to our advocacy request and look forward to your feedback.



Tom Burton – Municipal District of Greenview #16
Chair - Peace Region Economic Development Alliance

CC: Hon. Jason Nixon — Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
President of Treasury Board; Minister of Finance

Hon. Joseph Schow — Cardston-Siksika
Minister of Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration; Government House Leader

Northern MLAs Hon. Todd Loewen — Central Peace-Notley
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MLA Ron Wiebe - Grande Prairie-Wapiti
Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health (North)

MLA Scott Sinclair - Lesser Slave Lake

Robin Campbell – President; Coal Association of Canada

PREDA Membership – See Attached

Letter to the Minister of Energy & Minerals RE: Coal as a Critical Mineral

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