

September 25, 2015

Joel Windsor  
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Attention: Honourable Deron Bilous, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
204 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T6K 2B6

Dear Minister,

I am writing with a great deal of concern over how staff of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency has managed the Disaster Recovery Program (DRP). It is my belief that staff have misled not only claimants, advocates such as High River's DRP Advocacy Committee, Highwood MLA Wayne Anderson and myself, but also you. For this reason, I am asking that you launch an independent review of the Disaster Recovery Program, and that you require the current director in charge of the Disaster Recovery Program, Shane Schreiber, to vacate that position.

It is my belief that you, along with others, have been deceived into believing that the DRP is making adequate progress on the open files. As I have been tracking the progress of the DRP program since its inception, I cannot reconcile such claims with facts. Attached as a post-script to this letter you will find some anomalies that prevent me from accepting that adequate progress is being made.

I must be clear that I do not fault you for the complete confusion that exists in the Disaster Recovery Program. Frankly, I believe that staff has been mismanaging files, and worse, purposefully misleading you by reporting statistics without explaining what they mean. I believe the definitions of various designations of claims have been changed to suit a singular purpose, and that is to lead you to believe progress is in fact being made. "Open" doesn't really mean requiring closure. "Paid" doesn't really mean applicants have received money. "Fully-Funded" doesn't really mean claimants have received all the money they're going to get. "Complete" doesn't mean the claim has had all work completed with it. Without precise definitions of these terms, it is impossible to determine what progress is being made and how.

These facts, coupled with the fact that the Disaster Recovery Program was \$413,000,000 under budget according to the 2014/2015 Municipal Affairs Annual Report, leads me to conclude that all this has occurred to prevent someone from losing their job. If DRP appears to have slow progress and happens to be under-budget, that could easily confound a number of people into believing the manager of the program is doing his job.

The fact is that the manager, Mr. Shane Schreiber, is not. His program loses files, redefines claim designations, causes delays in the management of 2014 DRP files from Southern Alberta floods in that year, is forcing 20% of claimants to deem it necessary to appeal their results (way over the normal

10%), and is likely also recommending that various disasters such as the “Snowtember” disaster Calgary recently experienced not be covered.

A good manager of a Disaster Recovery Program should endeavour to work his or herself out of a job. Mr. Schreiber appears rather to be doing the opposite through confoundery.

Through this all, one extremely important fact has been lost; that at the end of each statistic is a human being. A human being who has watched their file move from “Open” to “Fully-Funded” to “Administrative Processing” to “Fully-Funded” to “Closed” and “Paid” back to “Open” again to “Closed” and finally to appeals. For over 2 full years.

It is for this reason I join the 91% of Alberta Urban Municipalities who also do not trust the DRP, and have asked you launch an independent review into the Disaster Recovery Program. Unlike a public inquiry which would almost certainly interrupt the progress of the Disaster Recovery Program, an independent review would allow the staff to continue to work on the open files and the appeals cases while a third-party analyzes how all the errors I have listed, and likely other errors, were allowed to proceed unchecked for so long.

Minister, I believe that you have a genuine desire to make right the errors of the former government. I feel it necessary to remind you that the errors of previous governments do not solely rest in replacing MLAs of the former governing party, but of demanding better of the staff who worked under them. Mr. Schreiber has not been doing his job, it is time to ask him to leave. Albertans want to trust the Disaster Recovery Program in the hopefully unlikely event they need it, and an independent review that leads to the implementation of its recommendations would make the program more trustworthy.

At your request, I can easily provide the evidence of the errors and misinformation I have listed in the attachment to this letter. I can be contacted by phone at (587) 287-6390 or by email at [windyjmusic@gmail.com](mailto:windyjmusic@gmail.com). Thank you for considering my words, and I truly hope you explore how you may have been misled to find a resolution that will once and for all fix DRP.

Yours faithfully,



Joel Windsor,  
High River, Alberta

CC: Mr. Jim Ross, Chairperson of the High River Disaster Recovery Advocacy Committee  
Mr. Bruce Masterman, Councillor for the Town of High River  
Mr. Wayne Anderson, M.L.A. for Highwood  
His Worship Craig Snodgrass, Mayor of the Town of High River  
Mr. Greg Clark, M.L.A. for Calgary-Elbow

## Anomalies in Management of DRP

- 1) At the time of former Premier Jim Prentice's announcement at the end of January 2015, advocates and claimants were led to believe that all DRP files would be closed by the end of June this year. Following that deadline, advocates were informed that promise applied to residential files only. Even so, the number of open residential files has steadily increased since that promise, so regardless of which files the promise applied to, that promise was not kept.
- 2) Between mid-April and early-June, statistics put out by the DRP office showed one small business file had been unaccounted for, possibly lost, in High River. The following report in late-July showed that file had been recovered, along with one other small business file and two residential files.
- 3) Between mid-August and early-September, a further four files province-wide had been added to the total applications. This brings the total "found" files to 11 since the former Premier's announcement in January of 2014. This is particularly confusing, as the deadline to submit DRP applications was in November of 2013, so these files were added far after the deadline.
- 4) The definitions of the various categories currently open DRP files are grouped under are nebulous at best. There are a multitude of examples of this lack of clarity and transparency.
  - a) Up until mid-April, "Fully-Funded" files were not considered "Open", but in every month following that they were. Further, in your report to media on September 21, 2015, you suggested that a "Fully-Funded" file is one where the claimant will have received all the money they are going to get, which would lead one to believe that file is "Closed", yet it remains in the "Open" category. Keep in mind there is also a "Paid" subcategory of "Closed" files as well, so "Fully-Funded" may be a redundant category.
  - b) Between mid-August and early-September, 16 files were suddenly removed from the "Withdrawn" subcategory of "Closed", suggesting that those files were not in fact closed.
  - c) Between mid-August and early-September the number of "Open" files increased by 59 files, most of which came from "Closed" files. A "Closed" file should not be transferred to an "Open" column, as "Closed" should mean the file is complete and requires no other work. Any appeals should be requested through an Application for Review, yet "Closed" files are moving to "Open" columns.
  - d) Between mid-August and early-September, 83 files moved out of the "Fully-Funded" designation, but not into a "Closed" designation as would be expected. Rather, it appears as though they moved to "Administrative Processing", which based on your report to the media on September 21, 2015, is a category for cheques that need to be delivered. This leads one to wonder how that is possible if the definition of "Fully-Funded" was to mean that claimants have already received all their money.
  - e) The number of "Open" small business claims has swung wildly since mid-March, indicating that either files are opening, closing and reopening again, or that the definition of "Open" instead has been shifting. With such confusing definitions and designations, small business claimants have every right to be upset at the 45-day timeline to respond to DRP staff demands or risk having their files closed permanently, a deadline that has passed with no further clarity.
  - f) At the late-July report of DRP progress, an indication that 160 cheques were approved needed to be delivered, yet since then the number of "Paid" files has only increased by 18, indicating either that 142 cheques are in limbo or that "Paid" does not mean what it intuitively suggests.
  - g) Between mid-August and early-September, 80 fewer closed residential files across Alberta were considered "Paid". Unless cheques have been returned by claimants, there should be no reason for an applicant to have suddenly become "Unpaid".