



P.O. Box 34  
5240 - 52nd Ave  
BERWYN, AB  
T0H 0E0  
Phone: (780) 338-3845  
Fax: (780) 338-2222  
Email: info@mdpeace.com

November 14, 2025

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

**The Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta**

Office of the Premier  
307 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

**Subject: Urgent Support for the Fairview Campus of Northwest Polytechnic**

The Municipal District of Peace No. 135 is writing to express our urgent support for the Fairview campus of Northwest Polytechnic and to demand immediate reconsideration of the announced closure. This campus is not merely an educational facility; it is critical infrastructure for northern Alberta. It provides hands-on, workforce-ready training that underpins the region's economic viability, community sustainability, and future growth. The consequences of closure would extend far beyond Fairview itself, creating cascading and long-term economic, social, and workforce disruptions throughout the entire Peace region and beyond.

Northern rural municipalities jointly created Veterinary Services Inc. to attract and retain large-animal veterinarians—a need that remains acute in every northern agricultural community. The Fairview campus plays a central and irreplaceable role in that strategy by training veterinary technologists with skills tailored specifically to large-animal care and northern production practices. This specialization does not exist elsewhere. Southern and urban veterinary programs simply cannot replicate the practical, immersive experience that northern students receive at Fairview. The closure of this campus would undo decades of strategic regional planning, contradict the ongoing work of the Northern Alberta Development Council, and cripple the pipeline of skilled professionals essential to sustaining agricultural producers, supporting animal health, and protecting northern food security.

Partnerships with NADC have long provided grants, bursaries, and supports precisely so that northern students can train close to home. If Fairview closes, where will this training occur? What will become of the state-of-the-art teaching barns, labs, and equipment—assets funded over decades through public investment and community support? The loss of this infrastructure would not be temporary; it would be permanent.

We wish to highlight that the Honourable RJ Sigurdson has advised us your government is pursuing a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to addressing veterinary capacity, involving multiple ministries and a wide range of strategies and tactics. Budget 2022 committed \$67.4 million over three years to expand capacity within the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. This level of investment signals a clear recognition that the province faces a serious shortage of veterinary professionals. Yet veterinarians do not—and cannot—operate without veterinary technologists. Fairview is providing the large-animal, field-ready technologists our region depends on.

It is baffling that while UCVM is advancing proposals such as bridging programs to help foreign-trained graduates adapt to Alberta's production practices and regulatory standards, we would simultaneously shutter

K.5.c)

the only institution that trains our own young people to serve their own local industries. These two strategies cannot be reconciled. Northern students repeatedly tell us they want to stay in the region, support the industries they grew up in, and build their careers in their home communities. When they are forced to leave the north to access training, they inevitably form connections and establish roots elsewhere. Families become separated, rural industries lose potential workers, and communities lose the next generation of talent.

This is not a hypothetical risk—it is a well-documented, long-standing pattern. Once northern youth leave, most do not return, not because they do not want to, but because the pathways do not exist. Closing the Fairview campus deepens this long-term demographic and labour challenge.

Northern Alberta makes up 60% of the province's land mass and contributes significantly to both provincial and federal economies. The north remains a powerhouse of production, innovation, and resource development, and its principal industries—oil and gas, forestry, and agriculture—are directly supported by the specialized training offered at the Fairview campus. This is not simply a campus that meets regional needs; it is a campus that serves the economic interests of the entire province.

The agricultural potential of northern Alberta is extraordinary and poised for rapid expansion. Global markets are already shifting toward sustainable materials, renewable products, and high-value crops. Hemp production for fire-resistant building materials and sustainable textiles is projected to reach \$21.23 billion USD by 2034, with a compound annual growth rate of 12.67%. Plant-based protein development is also accelerating, with the pea market expanding in response to global food innovation and demand for sustainable proteins. Similar growth trajectories are expected in flax fibre and seed markets. Northern Alberta is ideally positioned to lead these surging markets—but only if the workforce exists to support them. Fairview's agriculture, trades, and animal health programs provide the foundation for that workforce.

The region is also preparing for major transformative developments, including a proposed nuclear facility. The proponent company has already expressed a firm commitment to local, hands-on training to build a qualified workforce in partnership with regional institutions. Closing Fairview eliminates the primary regional partner that is capable of delivering this training. This is not only a risk to workforce planning—it jeopardizes investor confidence and long-term regional economic development.

We must also stress the severe shortage of certified water and wastewater operators in northern Alberta. Municipalities are struggling to recruit and retain operators, threatening compliance, safety, and long-term infrastructure reliability. Fairview had recently introduced a water and wastewater program that was beginning to take root. Ending this program before it matures will deepen an already critical shortage and force municipalities to rely on costly outsourcing or long-distance recruitment, both of which strain budgets and reduce service stability.

Fairview's central location within the Peace region makes it uniquely accessible to communities across northern Alberta, Northwest Territories, and northeastern British Columbia. Students can travel easily, remain close to family supports, and participate in local industry while training. This accessibility is not replicable elsewhere in the province.

At a time when Alberta faces serious shortages in trades, technical professions, and hands-on occupations, Bill 20's shift toward theory-heavy post-secondary programming does not align with the practical, applied training northern Alberta requires. Fairview is precisely the type of campus the province should be expanding—not

closing—if the goal is to maintain a strong, ready workforce that can support large-scale development and rural sustainability.

Given these realities, the Municipal District of Peace calls for an immediate moratorium on the closure. All programs and courses must continue uninterrupted, and no campus assets may be removed, until the following steps are completed:

1. A full review of the decision to close the campus
2. Comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders on future options for the Fairview campus
3. A third-party financial audit
4. A third-party review of best practices for rural program delivery

We urge Ministers, senior officials, and governing bodies to act decisively to preserve this essential northern institution and ensure that northern Alberta remains strong, competitive, and well-positioned for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Willing', with a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Willing  
Reeve  
Municipal District of Peace No. 135  
[rwilling@mdpeace.com](mailto:rwilling@mdpeace.com)

RW/ss

Cc:

Minister of Advanced Education, Myles McDougall  
Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, RJ Sigurdson  
Minister of Jobs, Economy and Trade, Joseph Schow  
Minister of Energy and Minerals, Brian Jean  
Minister of Forestry and Parks, Todd Loewen  
Minister of Municipal Affairs, Dan Williams  
Minister of Technology and Innovation, Nate Glubish  
President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, Kara Westerlund  
RMA District 4 Director, Karen Rosvold  
Big Lakes County Reeve and Council  
Birch Hills County Reeve and Council  
Clear Hills County Reeve and Council  
MD of Fairview Reeve and Council  
County of Grande Prairie Reeve and Council

MD of Greenview Reeve and Council  
Mackenzie County Reeve and Council  
County of Northern Lights Reeve and Council  
Northern Sunrise County Reeve and Council  
MD of Opportunity Reeve and Council  
Saddle Hills County Reeve and Council  
MD of Smoky River Reeve and Council  
MD of Spirit River Reeve and Council  
Town of Fairview Mayor and Council  
Alberta Municipalities  
Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL)