

Pro-CWB Director Election Campaign, News Release

For immediate release

October 17, 2006

Harper Government Throws a Wrench in Wheat Board Director Elections

(DeBolt, AB, Shoal Lake, MB.) In another unprecedented action more befitting a banana republic than a modern democracy, Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has changed the election rules in the middle of the current CWB farmer director elections. Today the Minister announced changes in the eligibility of farmers to vote in the election process which started September 5th. and concludes December 1st. The Minister's order disqualifies over 36 percent or 16,169 producers from automatically receiving a ballot. These producers had received a mailing from Meyers, Norris, Penny, the Election Coordinator, in early September confirming their eligibility. "In the first meeting that our CWB Board had with the Minister last February we discussed the findings of the CWB Election Review Panel and he acknowledged the need to make decisions on any changes quickly as the elections were scheduled for the fall" said Bill Nicholson, CWB Director for District Nine.

"This mid-election change to the voters list is not only disruptive but will cause confusion for many eligible voters. It will cost farmers thousands of extra dollars for the election coordinator to contact farmers who are suddenly no longer automatically eligible and to administer the new more complicated process that results from the Minister's order." stated Art Macklin, CWB Director for District One. Mr. Macklin went on to say "I am disappointed to say that this is more evidence that the Federal Conservatives are bent on dismantling the CWB and will use questionable tactics to do so. On October 5th. they curtailed freedom of speech with a permanent gag order on the CWB, and on October 17th. they disrupt the CWB director elections and I wonder what stunt they will pull next week?"

Nicholson concluded by saying "Minister Strahl's assertion that he has the CWB's support in this is totally without foundation. The CWB is merely respecting the law that states, *the Corporation shall take any measures that the Minister may determine for the proper conduct and supervision of an election of directors.* Since the Harper Government has had over seven months to make the changes announced today, I can only conclude that Minister Strahl is either getting highly ill-considered advice, or is willingly using his power under the Act to create havoc in the CWB election."

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- **Art Macklin**, 61, with wife, Donna and son Nathan, operates a 1600 acre grain and cattle farm northeast of Grande Prairie at DeBolt, Alberta.

- **Bill Nicholson**, 50, farms at Shoal Lake, Manitoba producing cereals, oilseeds and pulse crops. He has been the elected director for District 9 since 1998 and served as Chair of the CWB's Strategic Issues Committee since 2003.

Note to Editors: If you wish to receive news releases via e-mail, please forward your e-mail address to Ken Larsen at: Hillfarm@rttinc.com Please put "Pro-CWB" in the subject line. If you have any problems with this facsimile or questions, please phone me at: 403-746-3463.