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Alberta's Grizzly Bears Are Worth More Alive Than Dead

Conservation Groups Call on the Province to Recognize Wildlife as a Long-Term Economic Asset

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Amiskwaciwâskahikan/Edmonton, Alberta — Exposed Wildlife Conservancy, in collaboration with Alberta Wilderness Association and the Grizzly Bear Foundation, have launched the third letter in their province-wide campaign. This letter expresses support for the Government of Alberta's recent commitment to grizzly bear recovery and encourages the province to maintain the closure of the grizzly bear hunt whilst recognizing the significant long-term economic value of living grizzly bears.

As Alberta continues advancing ambitious tourism and economic diversification goals that increasingly rely on healthy ecosystems, wildlife viewing opportunities, and sustainable ecotourism experiences, the campaign highlights the importance of recovery and protections for its iconic threatened species.

In a newly released official statement, the organizations demonstrate the value of grizzly bears on the landscape and show that reopening a recreational hunt for a species listed as Threatened under Alberta's Wildlife Act would undermine Alberta's broader economic objectives while introducing unnecessary ecological and reputational risks.

"Living grizzly bears generate long-term economic value for Alberta year after year," said Maggie Spizzirri, Executive Director of Exposed Wildlife Conservancy. "Wildlife viewing, photography, guiding, outdoor recreation, and ecotourism all depend on healthy wildlife populations and intact ecosystems. These are renewable economic assets that continue contributing to local communities over time."

Non-consumptive nature-based tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global tourism economy, with Alberta increasingly positioning wildlife and wilderness experiences as central components of its long-term tourism strategy.

Research examining bear-viewing tourism in western North America has consistently demonstrated that living wildlife generates significantly greater economic output, employment opportunities, and recurring regional revenue than recreational hunting associated with the same species.

“The conservation economy is rapidly replacing the old extractive model of wildlife management,” said Nicholas Scapillati, Executive Director of the Grizzly Bear Foundation. “As Alberta works to diversify its economy and grow tourism, living wildlife should be recognized as one of the province’s most valuable natural assets.”

The organizations also warn that reopening a grizzly bear hunt could create reputational challenges at a time when global tourism markets increasingly favour destinations associated with conservation, sustainability, and ethical wildlife experiences.

“At a time when Alberta is actively promoting itself as a world-class wildlife destination, reinstating a hunt for a threatened species would send a conflicting message,” said Ruiping Luo, Conservation Specialist at Alberta Wilderness Association. “Economic growth and conservation are not competing priorities. Long-term prosperity depends on protecting the natural assets that support both biodiversity and tourism.”

Public opinion research further indicates strong support among Canadians for maintaining protections and prioritizing conservation-focused wildlife management.

The organizations emphasize that grizzly bears have already been extirpated from Alberta’s prairie regions and continue to face mounting pressures from habitat fragmentation, industrial development, human-caused mortality, and preventable conflict.

As part of the third phase of the campaign, members of the public are being invited to participate in a province-wide letter-writing initiative recognizing the Minister’s recent commitment to recovery of grizzly bears and encouraging Alberta’s government to:

- Maintain the closure of the provincial grizzly bear hunt
- Recognize living wildlife as a long-term economic asset
- Support policies that strengthen non-consumptive tourism and rural economic resilience
- Invest in coexistence, conservation, and responsible wildlife stewardship
- Align wildlife policy with Alberta’s broader tourism and economic objectives

Campaign organizers say the final phase of the initiative is intended to highlight the growing connection between conservation, economic resilience, and Alberta’s international reputation as a destination for wilderness and wildlife experiences.

“The future of Alberta’s economy and the future of Alberta’s wildlife are deeply interconnected,” said Spizzirri. “Protecting grizzly bears is not separate from Alberta’s long-term prosperity; it is part

of safeguarding the landscapes, ecosystems, and natural identity that continue to support communities, tourism, and future generations.”

Learn More

[Send a Letter: Part 3](#)

[Read the Part 3 Official Statement](#)

[Read the Opening Statement and Joint Letter](#)

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