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Wild Rose

Wild Rose Report

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OVER-REGULATION JUST AS UNDESIREABLE AS TOO LITTLE

Although regulations are important to protect the public good, when regulations become excessive, unreasonable or duplicated they begin to work counter to the common good by stifling growth in the economy upon which everyone in a society depends.

Providing a regulatory framework is a key responsibility of governments. But over-regulation is in itself an abuse of the market forces that drive a healthy economy. Striking the proper balance between these competing forces is the key.

Those of you who regularly read my columns likely know by now that government red-tape is a bugbear of mine. I think there's good evidence that over-regulation became the default position of the federal bureaucracy during the Liberal years and I am proud to be a member of a Conservative Government that is taking action - through initiatives such as our Red-Tape Reduction Commission, for example - to untangle the red-tape that is strangling innovation and investment.

It is frustrating for me as an M.P. to see so much of the good work our Government does for the economy run up against over-regulation. I can't tell you how many farmers have congratulated me on our Government's work to open new international markets for their products, only to ask in the same breath if something can be done about the onerous regulatory road blocks in the way of them pursuing the new opportunities!

Regulations, of necessity, control production in order to give time for fair consideration of unintended consequences. And that's fair. But an over-regulated system opens itself to abuse by those who oppose production for reasons other than its merits. These reasons may be financially or ideologically motivated.

A good example of that can be seen in Alberta's energy sector, where organized groups – many of whom are based outside of Canada or receive funding from foreign interests – have sought to hijack the regulatory system. More than 4,300 interveners have overloaded the public consultations in the Northern Gateway pipeline project and stretched that phase of the process alone to 18 months! And look what has happened in the U.S., where special interests have harangued the administration to reject the Keystone XL project.

These processes can be shorter and effective, and they should be streamlined.

Foreign special interests - and their domestic proxies - are undermining Canada's national economic interests by seeking to risk, stall or at minimum delay Alberta's oil sands projects. If these groups were to succeed, it would blow a \$27-billion hole in the budgets of Canadian governments and cost 650,000 Canadian workers years worth of employment. These funds will help to pay Canadians' pensions and support their health care for years to come, and it is quite

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obviously not in Canada's national interest to simply sacrifice them on the altar of outsiders' ideologies.

Our Conservative Government believes Canadians deserve a say on what's in their national interest – not foreign interest groups – and we will continue to defend our energy sector and other resources, in part by taking a hard look at what we can do to streamline and prevent abuse of the regulations that govern them.