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Alberta Liberals Unveil Rural Agenda

Edmonton - The Alberta Liberals outlined their priority issues for rural Alberta today, which include implementing a farm income supports program in consultation with farmers and protecting Alberta's water supply.

"For over 100 years, farmers and ranchers have stoked the economic engine of the province," says Alberta Liberal Leader Kevin Taft. "Agriculture has always faced economic challenges, and when the business of agriculture takes a hit, rural Alberta feels it most of all."

The Alberta Liberal Rural Agenda:

- Protect long-term water supplies for agriculture and rural communities by:
 - Restrict inter-basin water transfers and resolving regional water issues through an open, public process
 - Phase out pumping fresh water down oil wells
 - Implement the Alberta Liberal coal bed methane (CBM) strategy to protect water quality and quantity.
- Collaborate with cattle producers to build a sustainable base for the beef industry.
- Review the Surface Rights Act and Expropriation Act to make sure a fair balance is struck between industry and landowners.
- Keep the Alberta Utilities Commission – the former EUB – responsible and accountable.
- Re-regulate electricity to better control prices and prevent skyrocketing utility bills for all rural Albertans.
- Restore Regional Agriculture Offices to create a "one-stop shop" for rural Albertans for information and consultative services on all rural provincial matters.
- Declare a moratorium on school closures until community school initiatives are implemented.
- Ensure that farm income supports are designed in consultation with farmers to ensure efficient delivery when aid is needed most.
- Strengthen policing and public safety.

"Our plan is designed to address rural Albertans' concerns, whether it's through farm income supports, collaborating with cattle producers to build a sustainable base for the beef industry or ensuring that we're taking care of our fresh water," says Taft.

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