



October 6, 2008

Garry Merkel, Co-Chair
Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council (PAC)
466 Second Avenue
Kimberley, British Columbia
V1A 2P7

Dear Mr. Merkel:

Thank you for your letter of February 26, 2008, addressed to the former Minister of Forests and Range from the Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council (PAC) regarding forest worker safety. I have now had the opportunity to consider the PAC recommendation to review forest practices legislation and your group's suggested parameters for that review. I appreciate that safety for forest workers is important to all PAC members. I share your interests in improving the safety record of forest workers, and I am taking an active role in determining how we go about accomplishing that goal.



These recommendations are now being considered within the context of an overall MFR Forest Worker Safety Strategy, for which an Action Plan is being developed. To that end, I have asked my staff to prepare for me an analysis of the options that are available to us, to address PAC's recommendation.

In addition, our ministry's forest worker safety initiatives are now part of government's larger response to addressing worker safety. These initiatives will collectively address the broader safety concerns that were identified in the Auditor General's Report, the Forest Safety Ombudsman's Report, and the review done by the Forest and Range Evaluation Program.

I have asked Jim Snetsinger, Co-Chair, to keep PAC informed of the ministry's progress on worker safety initiatives, and to pass along any further specific safety-related concerns from PAC to the MFR Safety Team, or to our representatives on the Inter-Agency Safety Committee.

Sincerely yours,

Pat Bell
Minister