

January 12, 2018-01-13

Honourable George Heyman
Minister Environment & Climate Change Strategy
Parliament Buildings, Room 112
Victoria, B. C.
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Heyman,

Re: Professional Reliance

The Upper Nechako Wilderness Council (UNWC) was formed in 2005 by a group of local tourism operators in order to have one voice on behalf of wilderness tourism in our area. Our goal is to provide clear direction for management of those resource values considered vital to the well-being and sustainability of our members. We welcome this opportunity to offer comment on your government's review of professional reliance.

Over the years since our group's inception, our members have met with many foresters, who work for the licensees in this area, to discuss their logging plans in our areas of interest. We regularly receive development plans and harvest notification overview maps in the mail and company foresters will meet with us when we invite them from time to time, but largely this is to simply inform us of their development plans rather than to seek our input to the extent that plans would actually change to protect our operator's interests. Maintenance of wilderness values is critical to the success of our members and through our meetings with professionals working for area timber companies, it has been our experience that our forests are being managed to the lowest legislative standards possible. Industry-paid professionals are working for companies whose primary interest is an outcome that results in the most profit. Healthy ecosystems are not a goal. We believe that since the inception of forest stewardship plans and the Forest and Range Practices Act, ecosystem values have not been well-served by the current professional reliance system.

Government, who is responsible for regulation, monitoring and enforcement, has been down-sized to the point that it no longer has the staff to do the job of managing our forests. It is the collective belief of our members, that this has to change and that the government of the people needs to once again manage our forests. In the interim, we believe that the professional should sign a retainer agreement with the government, not the proponent, and that all documents prepared by professionals should be owned by the government which would make them available to the public.

Once again, we thank you for this opportunity to comment on government's review of professional reliance in B.C.

Yours sincerely,

June Wood
Director, Upper Nechako Wilderness Council