

January 11, 2020

To: Members of the Old Growth Strategic Review Panel

I understand that you have been engaged by the Provincial Government to conduct research and receive public input in order to make recommendations that will inform a new approach to old growth management in British Columbia.

Given that a significant amount of productive old growth forest in the Province has already been removed from sustainable harvesting, through the establishment, for example, of reserves, parks, urban and rural development and agriculture, and,

- given that forestry still makes significant economic contributions to Provincial revenues and sustains a number of rural communities throughout the Province, and,
- given that we should accept our role as resource managers and responsibly manage the remaining productive forested lands in the Province, and,
- given that the products of a responsibly managed and harvested forest provide not only economic but social and environmental benefits,

I would like to suggest to you that we approach the management of the remaining old growth in the Province by continuing to harvest and manage it in a way that finds a balance between economic, social and ecological values. I believe that a total ban on the harvest of old growth is irresponsible and does not allow for the maximization of resource benefits to the people of the Province. Such a ban could also leave us open to ecological disasters such a major fire, or disease outbreak, fueled and fostered by over-mature vegetation.

I live in a part of the Province where one of the longest running strikes in the forest industry in this region has had significant economic and social impacts. The absence of work in the forest industry caused by this labour dispute is only a pale prelude to what would happen here under a total ban on the harvest of old growth. I also live in a part of the Province where a fire ban that started in May and was not lifted until October was unheard of, and where one would never imagine a fire threatening homes in a west coast community like Zeballos.

There are a number of forest tenure holders in the Province with old-growth currently or at some point to be in their AAC. These resource managers should be given the challenge and the opportunity to find ways to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits they should be producing, as responsible managers of a highly valuable resource. And, unless we are going to give up on forestry in the Province, they should not have to focus entirely on managing a growing second growth resource that should be there for future generations.

Please consider finding a way to challenge resource managers to maintain a balance between economic, social and environmental values generated by the remaining productive old growth forests in this Province. We have the makings for this in the certification systems that have already been developed. You may wish, for example, to consider setting targets around healthy communities, revenues and other benefits generated, and refining indicators around environmental sustainability.

Thank you.

kind regards,

Annemarie Koch