

Dear Old Growth Panel members:

I want this province to remain “super natural” – home to all kinds of animals, awe inspiring forests, healthy oceans and happy human beings. I have lived long enough to see definite environmental degradation – salmon populations on the verge of extirpation, whole forests killed by the pine beetle, unprecedented droughts that stress trees, animals and people alike. I live on beautiful Quadra Island and am a board member of the Quadra chapter of the Sierra Club of BC. I have filled in the online questionnaire but wanted another opportunity to express my views.

In this time of climate crisis, I want to see a BC government that realizes how incredibly blessed we are, and how we must protect our land, water and air for us to have a better chance of surviving the coming challenges to our civilization.

Changing policies to protect the small percentage of old growth trees that remain is one of the things this government can definitely accomplish – as opposed to fighting battles with other provinces and the federal government e.g. over the Trans Mountain pipeline. Polls show that the great majority of British Columbians want old growth preserved – here is a fantastic opportunity to gain support from environmentally minded voters.

Our Old growth forests are valuable for carbon storage but they are also a treasure of humanity, and part of the way of life of our indigenous peoples. They are critical for the survival of all kinds of species that make up the web of life, and make BC such a special place.

From the reading I have done, I understand that changing our forestry practices is as important as transitioning away from the use of fossil fuels. The very severe fire seasons we have recently experienced are related to climate change, as is the huge amount of damage from pine beetles in recent decades. Pine beetle and logging damaged forests are less able to sequester carbon. The huge amount of burning and our forestry practices combined mean that since the early 2000s our forests have become a net source of carbon emissions. A separate report needs to be initiated to quantify carbon emissions from BC forests, and these numbers need to be integrated into provincial strategies such as CleanBC and the Coast Revitalization Initiative. The fastest way to start turning this around is to end logging of old growth. Protection of old growth trees has immediate climate benefits. We also need other measures such as phasing out slash burning, and improved management of second and third growth forests. It is possible to combine less damage per cubic metre of forested land with more jobs if we start logging more carefully. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change gives us a very small window of time to avoid catastrophe. Please listen to the feedback you get from non-indigenous concerned citizens, indigenous people, experts and conservationists who want to see old growth protected. Please refer to the following links for the facts that support what I have to say:

- 1) <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/SCBC-Forest-Emissions-Report-Jan-19.pdf>
- 2) <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019-Clearcut-Carbon-Executive-summary.pdf>
- 3) <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pojar-7mythsfinal-2019.pdf>

Thankyou for reading my letter, and for carefully weighing all the responses you receive.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Brownstein – cleo5048@yahoo.ca