

The forests and landscapes of coastal British Columbia are as unique and diverse as any in the world. The 'wild west coast' is revered for its rugged mountains, flowing rivers and lakes and old growth forests. This is especially true for the families who live and work in these rural communities and call this paradise home.

While biodiversity values and characteristics of the various ecosystems within these forests, must not be overlooked or ignored neither should the social and economic values these forests bring to the communities and people who live and work in them.

Yes coastal old growth forests has decreased in size, through urbanization/development, harvesting, and natural events such as major wind events & fire. Thankfully, previous sound forest stewardship decisions have ensured that many similar representative areas are protected.

For over 60 years the Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals, have protected the public's interest by balancing forest policy against socio-economic values, through intensive forest management and stewardship. Over time as these values have changed, so to have management practices to ensure the resources continue to be managed in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way.

The working forest (30% of the total forest available) is comprised of economically harvestable timber (Timber Harvesting Land Base – THLB) and non-economical timber. Proper management of the THLB is critically important to the rural communities of British Columbia. Harvesting, manufacturing, and silviculture jobs remain the backbone of many small communities of British Columbia. Without these jobs, our rural communities would suffer, forcing people to re-locate to find work elsewhere

Annual Allowable Cut calculations and assumptions made by industry and reviewed/approved by government have never considered the curtailment of Old Growth harvest. Provincial harvest levels are developed to provide long term economic stability while ensuring long term ecosystem management. Changing policy due to non-science-based pressures is contrary to years of professional forest management decisions.

I strongly disagree with the non-science-based rhetoric being pushed by these well funded international environmental groups whose mandate is to lobby and influence governments and mislead the public into believing there is an environmental crisis in the coastal BC old growth forests, when none exist.

British Columbia is the most sustainably managed forest region in the world. The province has more forested land under third-party environmental certification than any other country in the world. Do not allow our province to be harmed by international environmental groups and other organizations whose motives are based on emotion and votes rather than progressively adaptive forest management principles.

I am a proud third generation forestry worker from a small rural community on northern Vancouver Island, and father to a fourth. I'm very concerned about the impacts your proposed changes will have on my family, my community and the province of BC. We need to continue the path of long-term sustainable planning for all values. This will not only ensure Old Growth is present for future generations, jobs and rural communities will still exist to continue supporting the forest industry and the Province.

Brad Baron