

To: Old Growth Strategic Review Panel
From: Bryce Sparks
Date: January 27, 2020

RE: The Old Growth Dilemma

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of saving the working forests for all generations. I've spent the last 24 years working in the forest industry that has afforded me and my family a great way of life. The forest industry has faced many challenges during my career but none more daunting than the erosion of tenures, external pressures from special interest groups and poor land use decisions.

The only constant is change and forestry is not excluded from that change. We are always adapting and continually improving the way we manage and operate within the working forest. I'm proud and we should all be proud of the coastal forests we work, play and earn a living in. The decisions we make now and moving forward need to be made based on sound science, not from our heart or gut. The forest sector is a key piece of BC's economy, contributing billions in GDP and billions in the form of provincial taxes, logging taxes, fees, and stumpage. This revenue is important to providing essential services such as education, healthcare and infrastructure that all British Columbians benefit from.

Working in a renewable and sustainable resource industry should be celebrated, not demonized, as some groups would have it portrayed. It's important to have balance, we need to consider all values; biodiversity, water, fish, climate change, and socio-economics, to name a few.

I can only speak from my experience, but Old Growth will always exist in a multitude of ways from currently established Old Growth management areas to ungulate winter ranges, marbled murrelet habitat areas, goshawk reserves, parks, riparian reserve zones, big trees, retention patches and the list goes on. Forestry is exciting, we have the ability to grow old growth within our existing second growth blocks by retaining trees and establishing wildlife tree reserves throughout the harvest area. With time, these areas too will become old growth.

We are only touching the tip of the iceberg, with what forests have to offer us. The benefits of carbon sequestering and the value a healthy young forest has for the environment and society is immeasurable. Forests can help us in mitigating climate change, boost our economy through new innovative forest products such as Bio Fuels, Mass Timber and provide us with recreational opportunities a plenty.

In closing, I hope tireless thought and science has been given to the "Old Growth Review". There is way too much at stake not to give it the attention it deserves. Political parties will come and go but forests are forever. Ending Old Growth harvesting would be a knee jerk reaction to unwarranted efforts of environmentalists. We have been blessed with a bounty of natural resources in British Columbia all of us have and can continue to benefit from it, if we continue to manage it sustainably using the best tools, professionals and science we have.

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Bryce Sparks R.F.T.

