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VON 2R0

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Old Growth Strategic Review

Forest harvesting on the coast is sustainable, and well managed by a regulated profession. Biodiversity, species at risk, and old forest representation are required by law to be managed. The current level of protection for old growth in the coastal western hemlock ecosystem is adequate, and is not just concentrated on high elevation, low productivity areas, but includes productive sites with large trees as well. Habitat for a wide range of species, and other values are protected.

Protection for old growth in Coast Douglas fir ecosystems may not be currently adequate, but the biggest threat is deforestation as a result of urban development, not forestry.

Contrary to the mis-information provided by some environmental groups, harvesting wood stores carbon when used in long term products, replaces fossil fuels in some applications, and sequesters more carbon in the regenerating forest. Wood also replaces other building materials that have a larger carbon footprint such as concrete and steel. Maintaining the working forest has to be a significant part of BC's climate change strategy.

Forestry needs to be managed on a science-based manner, and government needs to continue to manage a regulatory regime that support sustainable resource management, which includes continuing to harvest old growth in the managed forest landbase. Stopping old growth harvesting now would dramatically reduce the coastal AAC. This would devastate rural communities, significantly reduce provincial revenue, and move the province backwards from transitioning towards a renewable economy.

Residents of rural communities matter. **Threatening sustainable forestry jobs in small communities as a result of a manufactured crisis by misinformed environmental groups is not good governance.** Forestry allows residents of small rural communities to have well paying, secure work so that they can support their families and community.

Government should increase their investment in research, in order to continue to ensure that forest management in BC represents the best available science, and to help build public confidence in the industry. Bowing to pressure from environmental groups is not the solution. BC is doing a good job of forest management, and support research to promote continues improvement in our practices a good path forward.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Mellstrom, RPF