

RE: Old Growth Review - January 27, 2020

To whom may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of saving the Working Forest for all Generations. I live in a small, forest resource-based community of Woss on northern Vancouver Island. I am employed by Western Forest Products Inc. and previously by Canadian Forest Products. During my 24-year career, there have been many changes and challenges that the forest industry has had to conform or adapt to.

The working forest is a renewable and sustainable resource, and there must be a balance between protecting the old growth forests and saving the working forests. Old growth forests and their many values have and are being protected through the creation of Parks and Reserves. There is 8.4 million hectares of coastal forested land, however only 30% of the coastal forest is available for harvesting. Since 1990 the forest industry on the coast has had the Annual Allowable Cut decline by 30%. Yet, the forest industry still manages to protect the old growth forest by using good management plans and practices. Plans that manage the forest from the landscape level down to the cut block level. Management practices such as Old Growth Management Areas, Riparian Reserves Zones, Ungulate Winter Range, Goshawk Reserves, Marble Murrelet habitat areas, Eagle nests, Bear dens, Big Trees and Retention Patches are used to ensure the old growth forest values are protected while working forest is being utilized.

I work on the silviculture side of the forestry industry and am very proud of how the future forests are being grown and managed. For every tree that is harvested there are 3 or more trees being planted back. Tree nurseries are continuously working on producing a better tree through genetic improvements. The future forests are becoming genetically superior with trees having high growth gains, better wood attributes and with more disease and pest resistance. These young trees are better at absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and help to reduce the impacts of climate change than the mature, old and dying trees. Planting trees also ensures that there will always be trees available to harvest. Eventually, there will be more and more planted trees that will reach merchantable size for harvesting or they can be managed to become the new-old growth, while the old and dying old growth is harvested. The life cycle of the managed forest will ensure that old growth forests continue to grow and be renewed. The big, beautiful and majestic trees that most people associate as being old growth forests will continue to be protected in Parks and Reserves.

Sustainable harvest plans must include a mix of old growth and second growth logging. Presently, there is not enough second growth at a merchantable rotation age to be sustainable or to support the needs and demands for wood and wood products. The impacts of the stopping the harvest of old growth forest would be wide spread. The forest companies would suffer greatly or even collapse, but the greater impact would be to the workers, their families, communities, support industries and even the Province. The harvesting of trees employs many people directly and indirectly and generates a lot of revenue for the government to put into essential services such as health care, education and infrastructure that are used by all British Columbian's.

The current labour dispute between WFP and United Steelworkers is a good example of how wide spread the impacts can be felt when there has been no logging for only eight months. I would expect the impact would be more severe if harvesting old growth forests were to end. I hope well thought out decisions are made before determining the future of the Working Forest.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Matthews

