

January 27, 2020

To Garry Merkel and Al Gorley,

RE: Old Growth Strategic Review

Dear Sirs,

I have worked for Western Forest Products for 14 years and understand how critical our old growth forests are not only to this business, but to all those who enjoy our forests and this beautiful land we call home. There is a plan. This is not the forest industry of yester-year. We are leaders in sustainable forest practices and are invested in providing long term stability for the communities where we operate. A moratorium on old growth logging will have far reaching social, economic and environmental impacts on this coast and should be avoided at all cost in favor of mutually beneficial and responsible forest practice activities to secure the future of our forests, provide a robust coastal economy, and continued care of our environment.

Sometimes it seems that the general population outside of the forest industry is not aware of the social, economic and environmental benefits that this renewable, carbon friendly wood resource brings to us all. At first glance, who wouldn't want to stop the decimation of our green space? But what is largely unknown is that Canada and British Columbia in particular are leaders in sustainable forest management practices. Western Forest Products, my employer for the past 14 years is an example of a company who has demonstrated environmental care and concern, improved cultural relationships, spent millions of dollars on infrastructure to support the harvest of old growth logs and jobs on Vancouver Island. These efforts along with a planned and strategic approach to harvesting despite an ever shrinking AAC is one that is set to ensure sustainability long into the future and is further supported by seed cultivation and nurseries that supply the seedlings for post-harvest regeneration.

It's not about how many letters or responses to surveys or opinions that matter, it's really about looking high above the noise, and seeing the heart of the problem with clarity. From my perspective, I am proud to be in the forest industry. I am confident that the company I work for is doing more than they can to improve our forest practices by working with ministry, environmental groups, first nations etc., to ensure longevity in this industry. What we need to do is spread these practices globally, ensuring our partners across the globe have as much care and concern as we do here in Canada.

These are difficult times. The task before you is enormous and I trust that you will not make your decision lightly. I ask you to ensure the continued relevance of our BC forest industry. I ask you to thoughtfully consider how much more than the forest industry is reliant upon our old growth trees, and that part of that reliance includes responsible harvesting for the success of our environment, the economy and all people who enjoy our coast. Unlike similar efforts in the past, I trust that your process will concentrate on factual information, ignore political promises and provide a recommendation that will be suitable for all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cleghorn
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