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Mr Gary Merkel and Mr Al Gorley  
Old Growth Strategic Review  
Government of BC

Dear sirs:

I have completed the questionnaire but want to add a personal submission. I have lived in BC since 1968, having moved from my home in Montreal to Vancouver as a young adult because of the incredible natural beauty of this province, its biodiversity and the access it provides for all human residents to live close to nature. I have lived in Victoria, Kamloops, Galiano Island and the Lower Mainland, hiking, skiing, beachcombing, birdwatching and just living. It is hard to convey how important preserving old growth forests is to me and how distressing to know that we are still logging the precious fragments we have left of the incredible wealth of magnificent old growth that once covered every hillside.

The forest industry is in crisis and crying out for more jobs, but the way we have been “managing” our forests, the jobs will all be gone with the trees soon. Our province must undergo a paradigm shift to recognize our remaining old growth, mature complete ecosystems as so much more valuable intact than “harvested”. These old growth forests are an intricate, precious and irreplaceable legacy from long before white settlers brought our industrial logging capacity to bear on these forests. I believe that it is the responsibility of all British Columbians to make sure our grandchildren and their children’s children can experience spotted owls and tree frogs and murrelets in the wild. My generation has been shocked and deeply saddened by ugly wasteful clearcut wounds on the mountainsides.

BC needs a much smaller, sustainable forest industry that protects old growth and biodiversity, cuts second and third growth trees and adds maximum value to the wood before it leaves the province. I applaud the government’s plan to retrain some forestry workers to be heavy equipment operators. People who have devoted their life’s work to the current, unsustainable forest industry deserve help to maintain their families and transition to other work in forestry or otherwise.

I appreciate your dedication to this work and pray that you will give our government a way forward that stops the destruction of remaining old growth.

Submitted by  
Jocelyn Gifford

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