

Letter to: Old Growth Review Panel

January 3, 2020

To whom it may concern:

My name is John Reynolds and I am a professional forester currently working for Western Forest Products in Campbell River, B.C. I have been working in operational forestry since 1996 when I landed my first summer student job with Pacific Forest Products in Gold River. I have been working exclusively on Crown Lands on Northern Vancouver Island for 25 years. My entire career has been dependant on the Old Growth forests of the BC coast.

The communities of the North Island are heavily dependant on a healthy forest industry, both directly and indirectly. My wife is a teacher and my two children attend school in Campbell River. Over my 25 years of living on the North Island, I can assure you that changes to the industry (either temporary or permanent) not only affect those working directly in the industry, but also everyone else in those communities. Portions of the community that are indirectly linked to the forest industry feel the effect of downturns, policy decisions, market conditions, etc. These include the viability of businesses, real estate prices, populations within the communities and schools, right down to what's available in a small town grocery store. Changes to these aspects of the community directly impact the viability of a community as well as the services those communities are able to offer. The ripple effect of negative changes to the industry are felt by everyone within the communities, but also throughout the rest of the province due to the significant revenue stream the industry creates. To be clear, a healthy forest industry is critical not only to these communities, but equally as much for the entire province of BC.

Harvesting on the BC coast is from my perspective done in a sustainable manner. Timber is a renewable resource, and Old Growth (OG) is a critical component of that sustainable harvest. The facts are clear:

- Only 30% of coastal BC forests are available for harvest, while the majority (70%) are reserved from harvest. The areas reserved for harvest can be for a specific reason such as riparian reserves, ungulate winter ranges or wildlife tree retention areas. Others may provide wider-ranging benefits in the form of parks, Old Growth Management Areas, or are just simply inaccessible for harvest.
- Only 0.3% of BC's OG forests are harvested annually. This is done sustainably from the 30% of the landbase that is available for harvest.
- Coastal OG forests (both protected and available for harvest) are well distributed spatially across the landscape and across a wide variety of biogeoclimatic zones. This again speaks to the diversity of forests that has been successfully maintained over time.
- Excluding OG from the harvest profile would result in harvest reductions of between 70-80% for many Vancouver Island communities.
- Reducing OG harvest would directly result in the loss of thousands of jobs through the closure of many sawmills that are structured specifically for manufacturing products from OG timber.
- Climate change mitigation would be impacted through the reduction of OG harvest, as young second growth stands are better suited to store carbon while old forests release more carbon.

Unfortunately there are many misconceptions regarding forestry and harvesting of OG in BC. These misconceptions are often successfully propagated to individuals or groups who don't have a complete understanding of the industry or the resources that are being managed. Clearcut logging, truth surrounding remaining OG, impact to jobs and communities and the level of care and management of those resources is often misrepresented in the media. Unfortunately, those who don't have intimate knowledge of the industry are easily swayed by this propaganda that tugs at their heart-strings. Even the spouse of a professional forester friend of mine thought all the OG on Vancouver Island was gone, because there was none visible along the Island highway between Victoria and Campbell River (mostly urban or private land). Further, there is little knowledge of the complex management systems and legislative framework in place, nor the vast network of forest professionals who successfully manage the complex industry and its resources. Certainly, the industry is a balancing act of environmental, social and economic needs. I believe that generally things are in balance at the moment but are dangerously close to being pulled out of balance by placing too much weight on the social aspect through an inaccurate portrayal of reality.

For success, the path forward must be based on science. Forest professionals operating within the professional reliance model have successfully implemented the proper and balanced management of our forest resources. This management has not been static, but rather has been adaptive over time as we continuously improve to ensure all resources are managed properly. Companies such as WFP have highly complex management regimes and standards in place to manage resources to the highest level. Provincial processes such as the Timber Supply Review and associated Annual Allowable Cut determinations are dynamic and adapt to an ever-changing environment. Much of the coastal crown land harvest is managed by companies who hold long-term tenures and as such it is in their best interest to ensure harvest is done in a sustainable manner. Otherwise, they would be putting themselves, their employees and their communities at risk. Specific to OG harvest, science tells us that a move away from OG harvest would significantly reduce the medium and long-term timber supply. This in turn would destroy jobs, families, communities as well as the well being of many aspects of the entire province in the long-term.

My request of the panel during their OG review is to consider OG harvesting as a critical and well-managed component of a successful and ever-changing industry. Recommendations to government must stress that science must be the basis of policy decisions moving forward and that continued trust in BC's forest professionals must be maintained. Our industry and the working forest it relies upon needs protection against the untruthful rhetoric that sways the uninformed. As a working, tax-paying member of this province, I do not support a reduction in OG harvest as a reaction to unguided social pressures as it would have a significant impact to my family, my community and the viability of the industry across British Columbia.

Respectfully,
John Adam Reynolds, RPF #3911

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Adam Reynolds', is written below the typed name.