

January 31, 2020

Kevin Laird, RPF  
P.O. Box 722,  
Port McNeill, BC  
V0N 2R0

**Re: Submission to Old Growth Strategic Review Panel**

I live on North Vancouver Island in Port McNeill and earn my living from the Forest Industry. I am pleased to be able to provide you my perspectives as a Professional Forester on the topic of **Coastal Old Growth** and hope you find them helpful as part of the Old Growth Strategic review.

First, I don't believe we have anything to be ashamed of here in BC on how we are currently managing the timber resource. British Columbia is known for its world class forest management practices. Just like everything in life, managing the timber resource and specifically Old Growth is all about "**balance**".

I think we've done a pretty good job in balancing the need to have large areas of Old Growth timber preserved in areas such as Parks, Wildlife Habitat Areas, Ungulate Winter Ranges, Riparian Reserve Zones, Visually sensitive areas etc. I'll be honest in that I personally enjoy getting out in the forest and trekking through some of these majestic areas. However, I believe it's equally important to maintain the amount of Old Growth that's currently left remaining and available in the working forest (ie striking the right balance). This is important in order to sustain communities and provide employment (ie social values). The forest industry is at a point where it cannot handle another significant "take-back" of timber.

To get an idea of the devastation that could occur in communities when the forest industry isn't healthy, one doesn't have to look any further than what is happening now in the small communities of Vancouver Island due to the coastal strike that is happening between Western Forest Products and the United Steel Workers. This could be a glimpse into the future if any significant restrictions are made to the amount of Old Growth that is available for harvest.

It's important for me to also provide an honest assessment of the many Forestry Workers/Loggers that I've worked with on the Coast over the past 20+ years. I can tell you with certainty that Forestry Workers/Loggers are hard-working, proud individuals. Almost every individual I've ever come across in my professional career cared deeply about their industry and their impacts on the environment. Many times I've talked with Foremen and had field reviews on trying to find the best solution to harvest timber while not impacting all the other values we were trying to manage. Having Professional Foresters manage the Working Forest for a variety of values including Old Growth and utilizing Land Stewards such as Coastal Loggers to achieve this goal is a much preferred option versus needlessly reserving Old Growth to appease City folks or foreigners who don't have the first-hand knowledge to see and understand the complex business we are in and the fantastic job we are doing in balancing all the values of the forests and needs of society.

In conclusion, I hope that you seriously consider the potential impacts to people and communities in any future decisions you recommend with respect to harvesting Old Growth in designated working forests.

Respectfully,

Kevin Laird, RPF