

From: [FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX](#)
To: [Old Growth Strategic Review](#)
Subject: FW: Old Growth - Pro Logging/ Working Forests
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From: Lulu Schmidt <lulu.schmidt55@gmail.com>
Sent: February 3, 2020 2:36 PM
To: FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX <Oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Old Growth - Pro Logging/ Working Forests

Hello,

We have all heard: The forestry industry is bad for our environment. In fact, this opinion, for some environmentalists, is more like a religious belief. But is this true and can a fixed opinion be swayed? Perhaps, an unbiased Netflix documentary showcasing all the positive contributions of this vital profession set to folk music could change ones mind, such as the documentaries created by environmentalists. But will this ever happen? I, for one, do not think so. This physically gruelling profession has little or no support or value in the mind of the average citizen. Shrouded in darkness and wrapped tightly in a hi-vis cloak of masculinity people struggle to know this profession. Therefore forestry workers have only themselves to lean on and promote their industry, which becomes a lonely slog.

Like a nurse has their finger on the pulse of the hospital, the majority of men and women in the forest industry have an intimate understanding of the woods. If anyone truly sees the importance of our environmental health and appreciates its dangerous beauty on a daily basis it is the men and women in this profession. Many of whom are working away from their families in camps for weeks or even months at a time. My husband, with his shaved head and tattoos on his back, is often judged to be someone else - certainly not a vegan logger. It is easy to judge without knowing, and this ignorance needs to change. The forest industry is diverse; it employs lumberjacks, tree planters, foresters, accountants, truckers and geomorphologists. People would be surprised at how large of an impact the forest industry has. This impact creates communities and contributes tremendously to local economies. We use this renewable resource continually to build our houses, to heat our homes, and to wipe our bottoms. Wood fibre can be transformed into paintings that inspire and transport us and books that educate both children and adults and simply entertain us. It is made into pellets for new biomass fuel, which is more efficient than firewood, coal, oil, and gas. It is part of our morning and evening routines when we brush our teeth with toothpaste containing cellulose gum and xylitol, made specifically from birch trees. Wood products are components of medicine, cigarette filters, ink, sunscreen, Parmesan cheese, chewing gum, nail polish, and ice cream. Cellulose plays a vital role in maintaining a healthy digestion and is naturally biodegradable. Cellulose is also superbly diverse and is used in our food as well as new sustainable building materials.

Environmentalists identify many problems caused by the forest industry but in my opinion they have few practical solutions. Because of a global market and need for wood we cannot be shortsighted and irresponsible to think we can simply do away with the forest industry. If we did regulate the industry into oblivion, other countries potentially with far fewer regulations and laws would replace our industry. If we care about our global environmental health then we must acknowledge the simple fact that if forest companies crash here, business will go elsewhere. If we could do away with wooden products then what would replace them - plastic? Sadly, our recent history suggests plastic is the answer - paper bags replaced by plastic; former wooden toys now made from plastic; and car dashboards once carved from wood now molded from plastic by plastic machines. The list goes on and on and on. Microplastics, which are any type of plastic fragment less than 5 mm in length, are unnaturally bombarding our environment and contaminating everything they touch including our own bloodstreams. Wood is one of nature's gifts and if used appropriately, wood provides energy for us, wood provides shelter for us, and wood consumes carbon. Speaking of carbon, we must remember that carbon stored in wood is only released back to the atmosphere when the wood product is burnt or decays. For example, wood framing in our homes has a carbon storage life of approximately a hundred years. It is naive to think old growth forests aren't releasing carbon as they decay. Trees like all photosynthesizing plants store carbon and like all living things have a natural lifespan. Therefore by responsibly utilizing these mature trees and preserving their wood we can actually grow our carbon bank. It is an ultimate renewable resource that should be harnessed with enthusiasm and respect while obeying the laws and regulations. We would not serve our environment responsibly if we did not honour nature's gift. I predict, in years to come, there will be a documentary, "Who Killed The Wood Products".

Is this the industry that should be under the environmental guillotine? In my opinion, it produces the friendliest material out

there. The forest industry and reforestation go hand in hand unlike other industries that play a large role in deforestation. For every tree that is felled three or more are replanted; however, on clear cuts for agriculture, ranching, and industrial and residential development few trees are ever replanted. Millions of acres of forestland are permanently lost to growing commodity products like palm oil and soybeans. Ski slopes, vineyards, and golf courses scatter our landscapes and take up thousands of hectares yet these unrestored clearcuts are justified as industrial or recreational areas that we need to grow the economy. We are all aware of the shamelessly environment-unfriendly clothing industries that leave a mammoth water and carbon footprint. Not long ago, fashion editorials consisted of two seasons unlike now where they are selling four seasons plus festive wear. The quality of clothing continues to diminish and with it the price therefore the consumer purchases more frequently only adding to the climate crisis. That being said, the forest industry should learn something from textile and fashion's heavy marketing and green ad campaigns, which appear to be highly effective in convincing consumers that their clothing product is environmentally-safe. The truth is fashion production is incredibly toxic and damaging to all living beings and our environmental health. Ultimately, the only thing sustainable about our clothing industry is that we have the option of buying second hand clothes. Meanwhile, the forest industry harvests a renewable resource and quietly replenishes more than it takes.

Ultimately, the human species has a profound effect on the environment. There are nearly eight billion people on earth and the possibility of sustainability is bleak if not impossible. We should universally focus on using our green renewable resources mindfully: sunlight, wind, rain, tides, plants (trees), algae, and geothermal heat. These renewable green resources are naturally replenished, as we know trees literally grow themselves, and these renewable resources hold the solution to the climate crisis. Reducing our water and carbon footprint, supporting local farmers and businesses, buying used versus new, eating a vegan diet, and staycationing instead of flying are a few things we could be doing to save our planet from ourselves. Canada is the world's second-largest country, covering nearly 10 million square kilometres. Our country is sparsely populated and dominated by forests and tundra. Therefore, it is our job to be the leader in sustainable forest management. No Canadians would want to buy wooden products from Russia or South America, where illegal and irresponsible logging is rampant. We should sustainably log our second and old growth Canadian working forests and set the global standard of good stewardship. It is time we wake up, think bigger picture, and support an incredible industry that is unfairly under attack. I would rather fill my home with locally made wooden furniture over cheaply made and questionably acquired wooden IKEA furniture. I am proud that my husband falls trees. I stand by our forest industry and like many local people, forestry feeds my family and the families of those people our incomes support. I know, despite my best choices, I have an insidious and negative environmental impact just like everyone else. Regrettably, we can't have everything we want, like Smartphones, refrigerators, trendy Gore-Tex jackets and keep our trees to hug.

Sincerely,
Lulu Schmidt

High School Educator, Mother to two with one more on the way, and Wife to a faller