

255 Arizona Drive
Campbell River, BC V9H 1V3

January 23, 2020

via email: oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca

Messieurs Gary Merkel, RPF and Al Gorley, RPF
Old Growth Review Panel

Re: Old Growth Strategic Review

Dear Panel Members,

As a professional forester who has worked in the coastal forest industry since 1989, I have been witness to the monumental changes that have occurred over the past 30 years, including, but definitely not limited to:

- the original “war in the woods” in Clayoquot Sound and the resulting land use decision;
- the *Commission on Resources and the Environment* (CORE) and the resulting regional land use plans;
- the *Protected Areas Strategy* and the resulting expansion of the provincial parks and protected areas system;
- the introduction of the *Forest Practices Code* and its successor the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) that include numerous requirements for old growth protection;
- land use agreements for Haida Gwaii and the Great Bear Rainforest;
- the expanding role of First Nations in land use decisions and the forest industry, including treaty settlements.

All of the above have resulted in reductions to the working forest on the coast of British Columbia and increased protection of old growth forests. So much so that the crown land allowable annual cut (AAC) on the coast has been reduced by over 30% in the span of my career. Current estimates indicate that roughly 70% of the coastal forest area is not available for timber harvesting.

The industry is structured based on an orderly and managed transition from harvesting natural forests to harvesting managed forests. Despite having more than a century of activity, this transition is still in progress. Having practiced in timber supply analysis work for the past twelve years or so, I can tell you that the short and mid-term timber supply of most management units on the coast is heavily reliant on the harvesting of old growth forests. While there has been harvesting for more than a century, the scope and scale of the industry greatly increased in the 1950s and 1960s with the transition to sustained yield following the 1945 Sloan Commission. This forest management model created units to be managed sustainably and those units basically still exist today. As such, the industry is approximately 60 years into the managed transition from natural forests to managed forests. With managed stand rotation ages often exceeding 80 and 100 years there is still 20-40 years to go before the transition is complete. Eliminating access to significant portions of the remaining natural forests within the working forest will disrupt this managed transition and significantly reduce harvest levels within most management units – likely in the order of 50% or more. This reduction would be due to a lack of managed stands old enough to harvest to maintain current AACs. The social and economic implications are enormous.

The demand for wood products is great as the world's population increases. Demand will likely (hopefully) increase in the future as climate change solutions are sought. Wood is the most sustainable and climate friendly building material on the planet. Its use should be encouraged and sourced from sustainably managed forests such as we proudly have in British Columbia. A smaller forest industry in British Columbia would result in increased demand for wood from other parts of the planet where practices may be unsustainable and therefore contribute to the world's climate challenges.

There is no doubt that there are old growth stands that contain rare and unique resources that warrant protection. The question is how much is enough? I believe if the average citizen understood that the forest industry is working in only 30% of the coastal forest area they would be shocked (at how low the number is) and feel comfortable that rare and unique areas can and are being managed in the other 70% of the forest. Granted much of the coastal working forest is on Vancouver Island and the southern mainland, close to the larger population centers, so the general impression is likely that the industry is having a much larger impact to the overall forest area. This geographic concentration of the working forest is for economic reasons – there is no sense in having the working forest be in locations where economics do not allow harvesting to occur.

Thank you for considering my input.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Davis". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Mike Davis, RPF