

January 31, 2020

Attention: Old Growth Strategic Review Panel

Thank you for the opportunity for me to provide my perspective and comments regarding Old-Growth forests in British Columbia.

I am a practicing forester with over 35 years of experience in the forest industry, of which 26 years have been on the BC coast. During my time on the BC coast I have worked exclusively for Western Forest Products Inc. and its predecessor companies (MacMillan Bloedel, Weyerhaeuser, Cascadia) where I was fortunate to work throughout most of its Timberlands Operations; I currently reside in Gold River BC.

Since the early 1990's I have observed a steady decline of the annual allowable cut by about 30% throughout the Coast. During my time in Port Alberni I experienced firsthand the Clayoquot Sound, Carmanah and Walbran Valley protests; as I transferred to Powell River, I dealt with the pressures on the forest resources by recreationists, First Nations and major legislative changes which impacted the overall management and availability of THLB within the tenure. Now, moving to the west coast I am observing the pressures being applied even more significantly by the environmental communities to preserve and protect areas such as the Great Bear Rainforest, Nootka Island and McKelvie Creek. As a result of these public pressures, the Government has chosen to make land use decisions that has impacted the AAC. As a professional, I believe in a balanced approach to forest management; however, as forest managers we need to ensure that all aspects of the resource are considered in the determination of its best use for the benefit of the people and communities of BC.

When you take into consideration the entire coastal area which includes Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, Great Bear rainforest and South Coast the provincial inventory indicates about 70% of the forest (2.8 million ha) has been set aside for non-timber reserves that is not available for harvesting. Within the 70% area retained the majority is old-growth timber or 250 years and older. It is impressive that the forest industry can make a viable long-standing business, support communities and provide economic wealth for the Province on just 30% of the resource. As you are seeking opinions on old growth -- it is my opinion that should the Government choose to make major land use decisions that further restricts the amount of available old growth timber available for harvest this will have a detrimental impact on communities, the industry and Provincial revenues. This includes reduced capital investments, employment and revenues.

Within Western Forest Products Inc. I am proud to be part of such a dynamic organization that has so many professionals who are dedicated to leading the way as stewards of the land, ensuring sustainable harvest levels and bringing innovative forest management ideas backed by science. Western is fortunate to having most of its holdings managed under the Tree Farm Licence system whereby allowing WFP the ability to manage its resources to the benefit of the communities, shareholders and the Province. There are no other major tenure holders in the Province that I am aware that has such a sophisticated Stewardship and Conservation Plan embedded right into the core of the Company. When this plan is complete it will provide a World Class Planning Standard that has a set of common data standards, shared technology platforms and a standardized operation procedure for the entire

Company. Again, should the Government choose to implement such land use decisions around old growth that negatively impacts WFP's ability to efficiently develop these plans it will have a significant impact on the overall management of the resource.

Finally, I would like to raise the point of the impact of significantly reducing the available harvest level from old growth and replacing it with second growth. When you look at the existing profile on the coast all recognized timber supply models always plan to harvest the oldest timber first; thereby, allowing the second growth timber to mature at a rate that can mature and sustain future harvests. What has been happening on the coast for decades is a very structured transition from old growth to second growth. This structured transition allows the resource users to model their operations and make business decisions in concert from the larger timber to smaller more homogeneous timber types. Any significant swing or change in the transition plan due to a Government intervention will have major impacts to the economy, businesses and communities.

I am proud to call myself a Professional Forester and be able to represent the public, my company, my profession and most important make my family proud. I can only imagine the magnitude of information, opinions and types of submissions that you must review prior to making recommendations to Government. I am sure as Professions you will make recommendations that are based on sound, scientific and defensible data as opposed to emotional and anecdotal opinions. I acknowledge that you have a difficult task ahead of you.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on this important issue.

With regards,

Paul J. Kutz, RPF

Gold River, BC