

To whom it may concern:

My name is Phil Howe, I am young forester living on the coast of Vancouver Island. I am writing this letter to voice my support for continuing to log “Old Growth” forests. I would first like to add some background to myself to support my opinion, that way this letter is not brushed off as a someone looking out for his own interests. Simply put, I have a genuine passion for the forests and the wildlife that resides in them. I grew up in rural Ontario, where my passion drove me to attend Lakehead University where I graduated with an honours degree in Forest Conservation after completing a wildlife thesis in 2012.

Since university I have moved to coastal BC and have worked an array of jobs in the forest industry, including engineering, silviculture, cruising, PSPs, wildlife surveys etc. I also worked for 2 years in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in Ontario. The 10 years of experience I have gained in the forest industry/ government as well as my current pursuit of my Professional Forester designation has given me a firm understanding of environmental principles, wildlife, and forestry practices/reg. I believe that as BC is widely considered the most sustainable forest industry in the world, we are managing the forest quite well. Although I support the conservation of old growth habitat, as many foresters do (don’t forget that we are the ones who live in these rural communities and enjoy the outdoors more than most), I believe our current legislation is doing a great job of conserving old growth for the future. In fact, 3.5 million ha of old growth forest in coastal BC is in parks or other reserves, along with another 2.8 million ha that will never be logged due to other constraints. I admit, there is always room for improvement, but that is already incorporated in our current adaptive management strategies, so I fail to see the need for such an abrupt change in management. It seems like the driving force on this initiative is through the public outcry of some misinformed individuals who are far removed from the topic of discussion.

The methods and science of forestry activities do not seem to be well publicized by the government or by industry, leading people to believe that forests are being managed poorly and without regulation. I am fortunate to know this added information given my education, experience and where I work. However, most public do not know these intricate details and do not share the same intimacy with the environment, this makes their understanding of "old growth" very skewed. For example, most of the general public could not even identify an old growth stand, this is evident in the many conservationist posters and pictures I've seen that identify second growth Douglas Fir stands as "old growth". This shows that without the public receiving accurate information from both sides of the discussion, the louder “fear mongering” messages given by “eco-warriors” will sway an abundance of the population in larger city centers like Vancouver and Victoria to vote on something they don't truly understand.

I believe the intentions of this initiative are good, but the reality of its implementation could be catastrophic to local economies and the economy of the entire province. I don't think people truly realize the impact that this decision can have, and without in-depth economic studies to analyze the repercussions, I believe it would be foolish to abruptly stop something that contributes \$2.1 billion to our GDP and supports nearly 10,000 jobs. This is a very serious decision and I think it needs more consideration prior to its implementation.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Phil Howe, FIT (5894)