RECOMMENDATION

TO THE BRITISH COLUMBIA OLD GROWTH STRATEGIC REVIEW PANEL

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I have lived in northern British Columbia for 24 years and experienced and studied B.C. old growth policies and practices for just about the whole of that time. My recommendation to the British Columbia Old Growth Strategic Review Panel, based on my research and experience, is simply to **bring all logging of old-growth forest to an end as soon as politically possible**.

Reasons for ending the logging of old-growth forest

(1) From the perspective of a 10-year (2030) horizon in the Canadian and international response to the global climate crisis, cutting old-growth forest is essentially the same as burning coal, oil, or natural gas. Carbon locked in living (or dead) trees 100-, 200-, or 300-years old is mostly liberated into the atmosphere by logging and no significant portion of it is subsequently sequestered by plantation trees or natural regrowth, *under historical conditions,* for over 35 years. With progressive climate change, northern old-growth stands logged today will quite probably never be replaced by long-lived plantation trees. Promoting the conversion of northern old-growth forest to plantations is intellectually dishonest.

(2) The same is true of the 30-year horizon (2050).

(3) High-elevation old-growth forests in particular are composed of comparatively slow-growing trees. Replacement times for them are beyond any usefulness whatsoever for combatting climate change.

(4) Only a small fraction of the carbon present in an unlogged northern old-growth forest is sequestered in milled lumber resulting from the logging of that forest. Moreover, even that small fraction has a surprisingly short average turnover time. Doubters of this assertion should read the research literature.

(5) The logging of montane old-growth forest entails a huge amount of waste of the wood in standing trees. High-elevation coniferous trees are strongly tapered and heavily branched. The floor of high-elevation old-growth forests is typically deep in dead but very slowly decaying stems. After logging, those stems are usually burned as slash. Even high-elevation forest soils store large amounts of relatively inert carbon. Because of disturbance in the course of logging, organic soils rapidly decompose and release most of their carbon into the atmosphere. High-elevation logging generally requires much carbon-intensive road building and the production of extra greenhouse gas emissions from transporting the logs to the mills.

(6) In northern British Columbia, the burning of old-growth forestry slash in general releases colossal and disproportionate quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Burning high-elevation old-growth forestry slash is even worse.

(7) Burning old-growth forestry slash also emits vast quantities of smoke into the bottom levels of regional airsheds. The smoke badly pollutes the air northern residents breathe, harming the health of tens of thousands of people, and it suppresses forms of economic activity which might serve as alternatives to forestry, such as amenity migration and tourism.

(8) A growing body of research and community experience tends towards the conclusion that the use of forestry slash and other debris as input for wood pellet production is bad or extremely bad for regional ecosystems, almost useless as a means of addressing climate change, and a major source of atmospheric and noise pollution for local communities in British Columbia and residents near thermal plants using the pellets as feedstock in, for example, Europe. Logging and using old-growth trees special-purpose, as increasingly is done in British Columbia, to produce fuel pellets makes no sense at all, because the displacement of fossil fuels burned in pellet-importing countries approximates net zero when the transportation and processing greenhouse gas emissions involved in making pellets in British Columbia are added to the loss of carbon storage in the original standing trees.

The research and grey literature supporting the reasoning behind my recommendation is now large. Winnowing it down to just a few peer-reviewed scientific articles or otherwise high-quality research-based documents would consume days of my time, but I could do so for the panel on request.