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Old Growth Strategic Review

Coastal forestry in BC has proven to be a sustainable industry that has evolved and adapted over decades to manage for various values including biodiversity, species at risk, and old growth forest. Products from BC's coastal old growth forests have been increasingly recognized as one of the greenest building materials on the planet and often replace materials that have a much more significant and long-lasting carbon footprint.

The current timber harvesting land base (THLB) in coastal BC comprises only 30% of the coastal forest. Since 1990 the coastal AAC has been decreased by 30% as a result of land use decisions and increased reserves and protection of these forests. Stopping old growth logging on the coast would devastate rural coastal communities that depend on these sustainable and stable jobs, and permanently reduce the coastal AAC.

There are many initiatives currently in place which show BC is committed to world-class forest management of the province's old growth. These include various company and provincial initiatives to protect "Big Trees" at the stand and landscape level, as well as retaining representative old-growth ecosystems. Increasing public knowledge of the current and future initiatives in BC's forest management is critical in helping to build public confidence in the management of BC's old growth. Increasing investment in research will also help solidify this confidence, as well as providing current and science-based information to inform decision making.

I believe the key to sustainable forest management is continuing to adapt science-based approaches which implement the best available science to inform decision making, rather than policy change as a result of non-science-based pressures. I fear that much of the misinformation on the status on BC's old growth is aimed at urban populations who do not live and work in rural resource-based communities and will have a significant impact on those who do. Threatening sustainable jobs in small coastal communities as a result of misinformed environmental groups is unacceptable. Ensuring that BC's forest management is informed based on science as opposed to pressure from environmental groups is key to ensuring that the coastal forest industry is sustainable for years to come.

Sincerely,

Robbie Brittain, FIT