

I am writing to this panel as a concerned Registered Professional Forester working on Vancouver Island. I have been working in the Forest industry for almost 5 years now, and during that short time I have witnessed changing attitudes and mounting social and political pressure that is threatening this industry and my future as a forester. I live in a community that relies on Forestry to thrive; a ban on old growth logging would cripple smaller communities across Vancouver Island, with approximately 10,000 jobs estimated to be lost. The effects of this would be felt across the province. To ban old growth logging entirely would be short-sighted and unsustainable for this industry, which provides almost 2 billion dollars in GDP to the government. How this loss might affect infrastructure investment, education and health care quality scares me and my family.

I have been reading a lot of statements in social media and news media where individuals are calling old growth forests “endangered”, which is clear misinformation. 42% (3.5 million hectares) of the forest land on the Coast is old growth (>250 years old). Currently 55% of this area is protected in parks and other reserves. Over 2.8 million hectares (81%) of old growth will never be touched due to other constraints, such as inaccessibility.

I believe Forest Professionals should be trusted to continue doing sound forest management, as we are trained and responsible for balancing social, economic and environmental values when making decisions. We are currently managing our forests in a transition phase to logging more second growth. Within 20 years the Coast will be logging more second growth than old growth. But this transition process takes time, as trees are slow-growing. At this moment in time, the majority of our second growth is too young to cut (under 61-100 years), which is why forestry relies on old growth logging.

I hope that this old growth review results in a forward-thinking long-term plan that takes the lack of second growth into consideration, while also balancing social and environmental considerations.

Sarah Germain, RPF