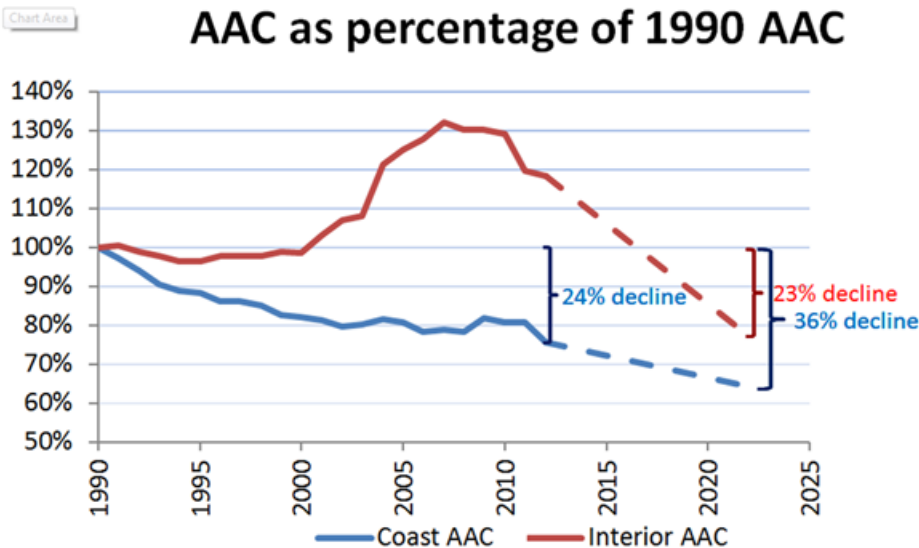


Old Growth Strategic Review – Town of Port McNeill Input

- From pre to post MPB epidemic the interior experienced an AAC decline of 23% decline
- During that same period the coast experienced a 36% decline in AAC associated with land base protection, parts protected areas and other land use changes.
- The North Coast has already had significant cuts to our AAC

This is represented in the graph (provided by WFP):



What old growth means and how we value it:

Our region predominantly harvests old growth. Should there be a moratorium on Old Growth Logging, as many NGO's are advocating for, it would mean a reduction to our harvest by 60%. The WFP/USW strike is an excellent example of the effects labour disputes and policy changes can have on a community such as ours. Local businesses are hurting, families need to utilize food banks and other services, and some have lost vehicles and contractor equipment is sure to be next.

The forestry sector provides good paying jobs, allows us to have a healthy economy and provide services for residents that aid in the recruitment & retention of people to the region. **Regionally, a moratorium on old growth harvesting today would effectively cut the industry on the coast in half – approx. ~4500 direct jobs and 10,000 overall jobs including indirect employment.**

We recognize the Old Growth Strategic Review is looking at all options, but we cannot emphasize enough the concern we have with the direction the review may take. Significant reduction in old growth cuts will have an immediate and severe ripple effects for us. It's not an exaggeration to say the industry on the coast would be decimated.

Our perspective on how old growth is managed:

The long-term plan for the coast is a transition to second growth harvesting; this has been happening for the last 25 years and will continue to occur over the coming years. We are adamant drastic changes

cannot occur overnight. Continuing a planned and measured transition to second growth harvesting will ensure a vibrant sustainable industry and a healthy forest.

Our region plants more than two trees for every that is harvested, and we harvest the whole profile of the forest. Within the working forest (TFL 6) over 50,000 ha are set aside as reserves for values such as water quality, wildlife, biodiversity and special features:

- Landscape Level Reserves - Old Growth Management Areas, Wildlife Habitat Areas, Ungulate Winter Ranges
- Stand Level Reserves - Riparian, Recreation, Timber Leave Areas, Big Trees (WFP Big Tree Policy)

BC forests are highly regulated and forest professionals are responsible for ensuring not only that the lands they manage will regenerate forests for future harvest, but also the resources such as water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, public use are considered and actively managed. LiDAR (laser imaging of the forest), LiDAR gives foresters detailed information about terrain, forest inventory. It allows for informed management.

We believe our region has some of the most sustainable harvesting methods in the province. Our very existence requires us to manage with long-term goals in mind.

How we think old growth could be managed more effectively in the future:

We are seeking your commitment the economic and social values will be weighted as much as the ecological values as part of any management plan proposed by government.

We urge the government to take the necessary steps to address the impacts of policy decisions on our communities. Our Community Forest will not able to absorb the increased burdens these policies will cause. We are also asking that you reconsider the Fibre Recovery Zones and how stumpage fees are charged so we can continue to generate income for our communities from the Community Forest and industry can continue to provide the important, well-paying jobs to our residents.

The Old Growth Strategic review causes concern for us, especially if the issues we have raised during the consultation process are not taken into consideration. We have suffered several hits recently regarding aquaculture and fish farms, sport fishing regulations and the WFP/USW strike. We are hurting. For 10 years the government has been silent while NGO's can spout rhetoric with no oversight and no rebuttal from the government.

Our question to the review committee is this. How are you going to transition the town and region when we have no mills to tie the lumber to? How are you going to ensure people can continue to be gainfully employed? What is your Plan B for us?

We are hoping this will not be the only opportunity for consultation. When a proposed policy is in place, and before it is enacted, we are asking for further input. We will keep raising the issue wherever we go with our MLA and other elected officials. Our survival depends on this process to be thoughtful, measured and thorough.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Gaby Wickstrom
On behalf of the Town of Port McNeill