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Old Growth Strategic Review Panel
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The protection of old growth forests in BC is on my mind in these times of human assisted global warming. For that reason I am writing to the Old Growth Strategic Review Panel.

I know that old-growth forests require hundreds of years to become established. They are every bit, if not more important, to protect than heritage buildings because they are living entities that regulate water flow by storing it and then releasing it into the skies; because they are a source of wonder and for economic benefits to tourism and recreation; and because in this time of global warming each old growth tree can sequester much more CO2 than dozens of newly planted trees.

I have not mentioned the importance of old growth forests as a specialized micro-habitat for various species many of which are at risk. Based on the government's working definition, old-growth forests comprise approximately 23% of forested area in BC, or 13.2 million hectares. The preservation of these remaining forests for CO2 sequestration would be welcomed by Canada's international partners in the attempt to meet Canada's agreed to Paris Climate targets.

The protection of the remaining old-growth forests in BC can be used as a marketing tool for tourism in the province, and a builder of respect for our commitments both to the UN and to our First Nations for whom old-growth forests have spiritual value. Wherever possible the province could partner with First Nations where-after consultations to establish stewards of preservation could occur. First Nations economic development can create new jobs and better opportunities in tourism.

The loss of jobs from the ending of cutting blocks in old-growth forests can be mitigated both by tourism related jobs, and by a massive provincial campaign of reforestation. Unemployment among youth is high, and proportionally more so among indigenous youth. Reforestation at an elevated rate would be a social as well as economic benefit.

Finally, I have noticed that successive governments have promised to encouraged 'value added' wood production in BC and to phase out 'raw log exports'. Were a government to take action to really do this transition whatever job losses were to occur by stopping old-growth logging would be more than compensated. However, in the present crisis of global dimension with regard to global warming the argument concerning the value of old-growth for carbon sequestration takes first place in my mind.

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