

There is no arguing that old growth forests in British Columbia are as scientifically significant as they are majestic and beautiful. This province was founded on timber harvesting and all the large metropolitan areas were once thriving Douglas Fir (CDF) forests which were logged upwards of 100 years ago. This we cannot change.

As I understand it this “Old Growth Strategic review” has come about to decide on whether old growth logging should be halted on Vancouver Island. For many reasons I will touch on this would be a horrible knee jerk reaction to special interest groups making “waves” in the media who do not speak for the greater majority of British Columbians.

- 1) Forestry and Logging in British Columbia has been and continues to be one of the main contributors of revenue for the province. Given that approximately 50% of the timber harvesting on Vancouver island is old growth and the fact that the stumpage paid on this timber is disproportionately higher than that of second growth it would have a significant affect on the revenue the crown would receive. Everyone in the province likes to drive on roads, have schools for their children and have adequate healthcare facilities. I am certain nobody would vote to curtail these services so the money will have to come from somewhere. I am certain the international special interest groups that are the ones lobbying for this change are not going to pick up the tab for the services of modern society.
- 2) It seems as though the groups lobbying for change have little regard for the people of this province. I myself live in Campbell River, BC and have proudly worked in the forest industry for the past 15 years. I know that a moratorium on old growth harvest would have catastrophic effects on the communities of this island. If you look at the current situation with the WFP strike you can see what a shutdown of one company, albeit the largest licensee on the coast has done to these communities. Now using this as a model take away 60% of the jobs as second growth logging is more mechanized than old growth and in many cases roads have already been built. Right there the labor forces at the front line has been drastically slashed. Now you should be able to translate that further down the line to the mills and realize that at least half of the mills will be geared towards processing old growth timber, these will obviously have to shut down as well. We also shouldn't forget about all the supporting businesses that exist in large part to serve the needs of logging operations.

With all of these well-paying jobs suddenly thrown into the trash I can't imagine that the government would not feel yet again another drop in their tax revenue as well as the drain on social assistance programs something like this would most likely cause. Many of the likely 10,000 jobs that would be lost are those of very specialized individuals with very specific skill sets which may not translate into other areas very well. With that said a large portion of these people would need to be re-trained. Will the special interest groups pay for this? Will they pay for the houses and vehicles and children's educations that workers will no longer be able to afford?

- 3) Lets base decisions on sound science and rational thinking. This to me seems like a simple theory. Gather and analyze information in an unbiased way and make a decision that is in the best interest of the public.

Facts: In coastal British Columbia there are 8.4 million hectares of forested land and 3.5 million hectares of old growth (>250 years). The timber harvesting land base (THLB) or the “working forest” on coastal BC is represented by 2.6 million hectares or 30% of the total forest available. The remaining 5.8 million ha’s or 70% of the forested land base is unavailable for harvest due to legislative restrictions or physical and economic constraints. This is not just mountain top scrub, 76% of the land base that is unavailable for harvest is within the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone in the elevation band between 0-1000 m which includes some of the most productive growing sites in all of BC.

On this limited portion (30%) of the forested land base a professionally managed, internationally recognized forest industry operates utilizing a science -based approach to forest management that ensures protection for sensitive ecosystems and species while managing a sustainable forest resource that provides the jobs that support families and the communities that they live in.

Fifty-five per cent of remaining old-growth forests, 500,000 hectares, are protected on Vancouver Island alone and will never be harvested. There are also millions of hectares of old-growth trees protected on the B.C. coast. These crucial facts are often ignored in the articles and arguments intended to pressure the government to end old-growth logging.

With the above points and FACTS which are based on sound science how can one believe that shutting down old growth logging on the island would be a good idea. I do not deny that there are certain ecosystems that are in short supply and that attention should be paid to them. Likely allot of these areas are covered by cities and were converted from forested land at the inception of this province.

It is my strong opinion that the people behind this movement do not have best interest of British Columbians at heart. They sit at their computers in cities around the world and work to shut down an industry while good honest people are in the woods just trying to make a living for themselves and their families. Shutting down an industry which is so integral to the province would have massive effects on the economy and the wellbeing of British Columbians that I don’t believe the greater majority of communities could come back from it.

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