

January 30, 2020

Dear Mr. Merkel and Mr. Gorley

Thank you for leading the Old-Growth Management Strategic Review Panel. The task to collect, listen and understand the many perspectives on this topic is a tremendous task. I am pleased to see each of your backgrounds and believe you are well-suited to the work.

I am fortunate to say I have worked in the forestry industry across Canada and the United States for nearly 20 years. I am not a forestry professional though, I work in the technology space and could choose any industry in which to work. I finished school in British Columbia and the work that appeared most interesting to me was in forestry. I mention this because over the years, I have had opportunities to switch to other industries but have always chosen to stay in forestry. Why? It is because of the people; hard-working, salt of the earth, passionate people who show up every day, despite the judgement that seems to plague the industry. They persevere because they believe in a working forest that supports the environment, the economy, our communities, people and families. I enjoy living and working with these people and raising my family in the communities where forestry is a mainstay. This is my home.

Timber is an incredibly valuable renewable resource. It benefits our society environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically. We enjoy these benefits every day. As you are aware, it needs to be managed professionally based on proven scientific practices. I appreciate that a portion of land have been set aside but I am concerned that removing further land would constrain the industry to the point that no one would remain to enjoy the lands.

A primary reason, as I understand it for further reductions in the working forest is to counteract climate change. As I'm sure you will hear from many experts far more qualified than I, but this seems quite short-sighted and contrary to nature. Past maturity, a tree becomes carbon-neutral, it does not consume the same amount of CO₂ from the atmosphere and as it starts to decay it releases increasingly more CO₂ into the atmosphere. Younger, growing trees are the most effective at consuming CO₂. A harvested tree is replaced by three new trees and that doesn't include natural regeneration.

Change is a natural part of the life cycle for all organisms. This change is crucial to create a strong, vibrant forest. Forestry professionals manage the forest in a way to mimic nature but create economic benefits and stability for the people and communities they serve. Nature will prevail either way and protected or not, areas will eventually be destroyed due to infestations, storms, wildfires or other natural causes. In Canada, wildfires and other natural disturbances release more CO₂ than harvesting. It seems to me, responsibly harvested timber used in construction and other forestry products ensure longer-term carbon storage and is better for the community.

Forestry professionals working in these forests have a specialized background of knowledge and skills to care for and manage these forests. For the 30% of coastal forests in which they operate, foresters have developed and implemented a science-based plan designed to transition to solely second-growth harvesting over the past quarter-century. It is a plan that considers the entire ecosystem, not just those areas available for harvesting. It is a plan to ensure community and economic stability and ensure the sustainability of the industry that continues to be a part of the world's carbon solution. It is a plan that maintains a vibrant working forest for all to enjoy. Disrupting this plan mid-stream will produce drastic results.

A forest that supports coastal families socially, culturally and economically as we live, work and play. A forest that contributes to a better environmental future world-wide. A vibrant forest that supports thriving people and communities for generations to come. This is a vision for everyone. I respectfully request no further restrictions to be placed on the forest industry regarding old-growth harvesting.

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