

June 18, 2019

Premier John Horgan;

RE: 1. Budget Considerations for 2020

2. Private Forest Land Management Review

In a short century and a half, the place I live has become a landscape dominated by human use. As part of this footprint, industrial logging has converted almost 80% of the forests on BC's south coast with a significant loss of ecosystem function. Almost all of the highest productivity valley bottom forests with the greatest biodiversity and biggest trees are now a young to maturing forest profile resulting in a much simplified and less resilient ecosystem. Industrial logging activity creep continues toward many remnant forests on steeper slopes and higher elevations exacerbating the problems more widely. The results of this are that every year, unique species and entire ecosystems are being pushed to the brink of collapse.

Many of British Columbia's most endangered ecosystems are often found on privately-owned lands, especially on southern Vancouver Island where these values have not been protected effectively in the past and continue to be liquidated where the small remnant areas of intact habitat remain. More alarming is the liquidation of forest ecosystems through industrial logging followed by real estate development. This "log and flog" real estate bonanza proceeds with little restriction and increasing demand.

Both the industry and government are irresponsible in that they take every effort to tout a transition to stewardship and improving practices toward a long term view while allowing this conversion to continue at a scale that is anything but sustainable in the true sense of social, economic and environmental values. Both parties need to change their approach on crown land and privately held private land.

The BC government should support budget financing that leads to ecosystem-based management. To succeed, I recommend the BC government prioritize the conservation of endangered old-growth forests and other high value landscapes by considering the following:

1. Through a process of tax-shifting the Government can promote stewardship on private lands that incentivizes conservation, protection and sustainability. Implementing a tax shift will help private land owners place a higher value on ecosystem function and biodiversity through their investments toward maintaining or enhancing these landscape attributes. Creative tax-shifting should have a limited impact on the overall tax base of BC. Research through UBC and elsewhere suggests that conservation gains are possible with modest shifts in tax policy.
2. The Government should establish a dedicated acquisition fund to purchase lands on a willing seller basis that will convert private lands of high conservation, scenic, cultural, and recreational value to crown ownership and protection. A land acquisition fund would open opportunities for partnership through matching grants and/or donations thereby increasing purchasing power and social license. These investments would also generate significant

financial returns to the province in terms of natural values, ecosystem services, carbon storage and secondary economy through tourism revenues. A program such as this would benefit from spatial planning to identify opportunities for landscape connectivity and representation of high value attributes in a protected areas network.

3. The Government should contribute funding toward sustainable economic diversification of Vancouver Island First Nations communities by facilitating the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in lieu of old-growth logging. An initiative like this could be combined with either of the preceding recommendations to make further gains toward a sustainable land management goal. Initiatives in this area would be support the Government's goals for reconciliation.

4. The Government should work with the forest industry to shift current practices toward more efficient wood fibre utilization. Practices should promote biodiversity and ecological connectivity across the landscape and to mitigate climate effects leading to pest infestations, advanced tree mortality and forest fires that are out of sync with natural cycles.

I have asked in previous correspondence that the provincial government should place a moratorium on old-growth harvesting altogether until such time as we have a legislated, science-based landscape plan that recognizes the current and future values of forest ecosystems. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Todd Golumbia

Central Saanich, Vancouver Island.

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