

To:

Premier of British Columbia The Honourable John Horgan

BC Green Party Leader Sonia Furstenau, M.L.A. for Cowichan Valley

BC Liberal Party Leader Andrew Wilkinson, M.L.A. for Vancouver-Quilchena

BC Conservative Party Leader Trevor Bolin

Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development Minister, Katrine Conroy, MLA for Kootenay-West

BC Rural Development Parliamentary Secretary, Roly Russell, MLA for Boundary-Similkameen

BC Minister of Municipal Affairs, Nathan Cullen

BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman

BC Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and Minister Responsible for Fisheries, Josie Osborne

BC Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Murray Rankin

Brittny Anderson, MLA for Nelson-Creston

John Rustad, Critic for Forestry

Renee Merrifield, Critic for Environment & Climate Change.

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Wednesday, March 30, 2022

People need clean water to drink to be healthy, and maintaining healthy forests, including old growth forests is key to protecting our watersheds that keep our drinking water clean. Healthy forests absorb carbon pollution, and help safeguard people and businesses from the worst climate impacts like flooding, droughts and wildfire, and help us meet the CleanBC goals.

We, the undersigned businesses, support the Government of the Province of British Columbia to:

1. Immediately defer logging in all of the most at-risk old growth forests;
2. Implement the remainder of the recommendations as laid out in the Old Growth Strategic Review report as already committed to by the BC NDP; and,
3. Operate within the legislation that has been passed to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Old growth forests are an important part of our communities. There are so few old growth forest areas left in the Kootenays. Residents love to go hiking and mountain biking amongst these giant old trees to stay cool on a hot day. Tourists share how amazed they are at finding huge ancient trees so far inland from the coast. These forests can help grow our local communities and local jobs if they are left standing.

The most at-risk and most valuable old growth forests are not protected by the old growth logging deferrals announced in September 2020 by the BC NDP. Critically endangered species like the Selkirk Caribou, Northern Goshawk and Spotted Owl are still losing their homes.

Taking immediate action on the Strategic Review's recommendations *now* is essential for the government to succeed in meeting its commitment to implement the recommendations within the timeline of the report. Scientists around the province have determined that there is far less old growth forest left than what it appears current provincial policy is based-on.

We are not against logging. We do want the most at-risk old growth forest to survive, and for logging in these rare areas to stop immediately. We urge the government to stop logging the most at risk, highly productive old growth forest before it is gone forever.

Thank you for hearing our input.

Signed,

The 51 West Kootenay-based businesses