June 2, 2021

VIA EMAIL: lhelps@victoria.ca

Lisa Helps, Mayor
City of Victoria

Re: Modernizing Forest Policy

Dear Mayor Helps:

Yesterday, the Premier and I shared a plan to modernize forest policy with the release of an intentions paper - www.gov.bc.ca/modernforestpolicy. This work aligns with our continued efforts to implement the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review and improve forest management through the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. I would like to update you on this work and our next steps.

Intentions Paper

Plans to modernize forest policy as outlined in the Intentions Paper stem from what we heard from Indigenous peoples, local governments, industry, stakeholders and the public in forestry-focused engagement initiatives over the past three years including the *Forest and Range Practices Act* Improvement Initiative, the Old Growth Strategic Review, Coast Forest Sector Revitalization, and Interior Forest Sector Renewal. Three principles emerged from these engagements to guide our work including a focus on strengthening sector diversity, enhancing sustainability and stewardship, and ensuring ongoing support of the forest sector, what we have called strengthening the social contract.

There are 20 policy intentions laid out in this paper with several directly connected to what we heard from community leaders. This includes ensuring the voices of your communities are considered in decisions, like tenure disposition, where our government brought in Bill 22 in 2019 on this topic and seek to make further improvements. Other topics include the need to prioritize greater access to community tenures if local jobs, particularly in manufacturing, can be demonstrated. I also want to highlight our intention to provide statutory decision makers with discretion in permit approvals if the forest management proposed as part of a permit could put forest values at risk of damage, and to have community perspectives considered in tenure replacement decisions. There is much to be excited about it in these intentions and I hope you will take the time to review them.

Ministry of Forests, Lands,
Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development

Office of the Minister

Mailing Address:
PO BOX 9049 Stn Prov Govt
[redacted]

Old Growth Strategic Review

In 2019, my predecessor appointed a two-person panel to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, industry, and stakeholders on what a new path forward on managing old growth could include. They visited 45 communities, held over 200 meetings with close to 800 people, and received over 300 written submissions and more than 18,000 survey responses. The report they submitted in Spring 2020, along with the insight which informed it is included on our website at Old Growth Forests - Province of British Columbia (gov.bc.ca).

The report and its 14 recommendations are complex and over the next two years policy options and implementation decisions will be developed into a new Old Growth Strategy for British Columbia. The immediate priorities are recommendations #1 and #6, that is to work with Indigenous Nations on a government-to-government basis, to identify if and where any further timber harvesting deferrals are needed where old growth is at a very high and near-term risk of irreversible biodiversity loss. Attached in Appendix 1 is a high-level roadmap for how the ministry plans to sequence the work on the recommendations going forward.

What's Next

Over the next several weeks, ministry staff will connect with you on a series of virtual town halls we would like to have you join. I have asked my Parliamentary Secretary Roly Russell to host these town halls as part of his role to hear from you on modernizing forest policy and how it affects your communities.

After several initiatives to better understand where we should start our modernization effort, I am pleased we are advancing this work. The experiences and insights your government can bring to the table on behalf of your community are most welcomed. I hope you can participate.

Sincerely,



Katrine Conroy
Minister

Enclosure

pc: Roly Russell, MLA, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development
Brian Frenkel, President, UBCM
Craig Sutherland, ADM, Coast Area
Sharon Hadway, Regional Executive Director, West Coast Region

Appendix 1:

Given the breadth and scope of the report, the province is recommending a phased approach to addressing the recommendations over the next two years. The diagram below illustrates recommendations #1, 5, 6, and 7 under the heading "Immediate Measures". The center column titled "Elements Required for Change" outlines recommendations #2, 4, 9, 13, 14 which set up a framework of key changes and policy shifts that support change. The third column titled "The New Old Growth Strategy" are recommendations #3, 8, 10, 11, and 12 which are critical to implementing change.

