



**Council Member Motion
For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of July 16, 2015**

Date: July 8, 2015

From: Councillor Jeremy Loveday and Councillor Ben Isitt

Subject: Protection of Biological Diversity of Walbran Valley

Background:

The Walbran Valley harbours some of the finest ancient forests remaining on southern Vancouver Island — one of the few watersheds that have largely avoided the negative ecological impacts of industrial logging activity.

Many Victoria residents have expressed concern over eight proposed cutblocks by license-holder Teal Jones on publicly owned lands in the central Walbran Valley adjacent to Carmanah-Walbran Provincial Park.

Tourism is worth close to 20 billion dollars annually in Victoria, and part of the draw to the City is its proximity (perceived or actual) to pristine wilderness areas. New clearcutting of previously untouched forests and 1000 year old trees will have significant negative impact on this perception.

The value of old-growth forests far surpasses its value as timber -- as a recreational resource, as a cultural resource utilized by First Nations since time immemorial, and as an unparalleled carbon sink.

Logging company Teal Jones Group has plans for imminent harvest (permits could be granted July 13, 2015) in the central Walbran Valley, one of the last significant tracts of intact old-growth rainforest on Vancouver Island. Less than ten per cent of low-elevation old-growth forest remains on Vancouver Island -- at two and half hours from Victoria, the central Walbran is among the closest old-growth area's to the City.

Advocacy organizations including the Wilderness Committee are requesting that Teal Jones and the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations agree to avoid logging in 0.5 % of Tree Farm License 46, in order to respect and protect the extraordinary biological diversity of the Walbran Valley.

Motion:

Be it resolved that Council request the Mayor to write a letter to the Honourable Steve Thomson Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations stating support for protecting the Old Growth Forests of Walbran Valley.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Loveday', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Jeremy Loveday

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben Isitt', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Ben Isitt