



STANDING UP FOR FORESTRY

First and foremost, I'd like to thank everyone who attended the TLA's 74th Annual Convention & Trade Show this year. It was one of the best conventions in my memory and I'm pleased and proud that so many people who work in the forest industry made time to go. Our speakers this year addressed a wide range of topics and our live and silent auctions raised considerable funds to support forestry education in BC. For a full review and photos of the convention, turn to page 24.

I'm also proud of the advocacy achievements we made during the convention. Premier Christy Clark made two major announcements in her speech during the Leader's Luncheon. The first was job training tax credits that will have a direct and positive impact for TLA members. Independent timber harvesting contractors know they are approaching a wall of retirements and this tax credit will help them make sure the knowledge of their experienced employees is passed down to the next generation. We're already working with Minister Shirley Bond on this project and it's moving quickly. The second announcement was the Contractor Sustainability Review. David Elstone addresses the review in more detail on page 8. However, I would like to state here that this was a landmark announcement and the result of several years of telling our story and offering solutions to a difficult and entrenched issue. This goes far beyond rates. We need to look at the working relationship between contractors and licensees and how it can be improved. Both these announcements showed me that the government of the day is listening, understands the forest industry and values the role independent timber harvesting contractors play within it.

As we move towards the provincial election in May, log exports continue to get more and more media attention. Anyone who works in the forest industry knows log exports are an important BC forest product. They enable us to

harvest the full profile of species and working conditions—there are many stands where if some logs aren't exported people won't be going to work. We get into more detail on log exports in the Market Report on page 15. I encourage you to read the article so you can correct misinformation on log exports when you hear it. Anyone who states that we should ban log exports knows nothing about our forest industry or the impact this would have on the coast of British Columbia. Period.

Most people who know me, know that I am passionate about this industry, which brings me to the broader issue of protecting the working forest. In the lead up to the election, we have already seen industry detractors attempt to mislead the public by conflating log exports and old growth harvesting. We must be vigilant in responding to anti-logging rhetoric and attempts to further shrink the working forest. There are individuals in this province that support shutting down logging operations entirely, by pulling on people's heart strings and providing them with misleading information and partial truths. The impact of their objectives would be devastating to our employees and would ruin rural community economies. I know this, because I have met some of these people. The TLA will continue to advocate for the industry, but we need everyone in the industry to share proudly what this industry means to them. One thing I do know—if we don't, I guarantee no one else will.

We received a lot of attention around the article, "Urban vs Rural: Addressing the Emergency Transportation Gap" in the Winter 2017 issue of *Truck LoggerBC*. The article discussed the difficulties workers and employers in remote regions have in accessing helicopter evacuation when they are injured. This is an issue close to my heart and I read with interest the report written by Roger Harris published in February. He made some good observations and

provided three recommendations that could improve the situation as it stands. We as an industry need to read this report and provide our feedback—our opinions and ideas matter in developing better working conditions. There is a link to the report on our website, visit www.tla.ca/HEMS.

Unfortunately, this brings me to the serious issue of safety in our industry. We've had five fatalities this year and, as I write this, we haven't finished the first quarter. We have the organizations in place to study these incidents and give us explanations and safety information to review. But it is up to us to ensure we do review these incidents with our crews and model safe practices ourselves wherever we go. Statistically, 95 per cent of incidents are caused by human behaviour and 85 per cent of that behaviour is caused by what people believe leadership wants as signaled by their everyday actions. We need to make sure each of us is building a culture of safety within our companies through our own actions and those of our supervisors. Our industry is evolving and gone are the days where we just look at the incident and the individual involved and lay blame. We need to have a much broader look at how the incident developed. We've come a long way in the last 20 years but we can't take our foot off the pedal on this one.

Finally, the TLA will be holding our May board meeting in Vernon so we can meet with the Interior Logging Association's board to discuss the challenges we share and so we can support the ILA's conference and outdoor equipment show. The ILA's equipment show gets bigger and more impressive each year and I'm looking forward to seeing it again. If you're in the Vernon area May 4-6, I highly recommend coming by and taking a look. There's more information about the ILA conference on page 21.▲

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