



HEALTHY LOGGING CONTRACTORS MEAN MORE JOBS FOR BC

Marching orders have been issued to the new government's ministers by Premier Horgan through his mandate letters. These letters—especially the one sent to Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development—will affect TLA members and independent timber harvesting contractors across the province.

The following are Minister Donaldson's mandate letter priorities paired with the TLA's perspective on the issues. I hope by adding our members' voice, we will be able to give the government some insight into the needs of timber harvesting contractors. After all, without contractors there is no forest industry in this province.

Protect and create jobs by fighting for a fair deal for BC wood products in softwood lumber negotiations with the United States.

- We support the Minister in seeking a fair softwood lumber deal that we hope benefits both the supply chain and the forest industry dependent communities in this province, and not just the interests of a few large forest product producers.

Work with communities and industry to develop a fair, lasting strategy to create more jobs by processing more logs in BC and to renew our forests by expanding investments in reforestation.

- Our coastal forests currently support 36,000 jobs (direct & indirect) through timber harvesting and manufacturing forest products while a wide range of products are also sold to international markets. With this in mind, we support looking at ways to increase the number of local jobs generated by our forests, which may or may not include processing more logs in BC.
- Protecting the working forest and ensuring timber harvesters can maximize opportunities to harvest the allowable annual cut (AAC) is the primary means to creating more jobs.

- By maximizing the current undercut of the AAC, this government could create 4,000 more jobs in our local coastal communities by accessing four million more cubic metres of unharvested timber annually.

- There are also ways to increase employment within our forest resource other than just processing more logs. Significant employment could be created by contractors working to mitigate wildfire impacts around Interior communities by implementing existing fuel management prescriptions. This would also offset future timber supply losses due to wildfire.

- Over the next decade, our industry will need to fill at least 4,700 jobs on BC's coast. Creation of a training tax credit would incentivize contractors to hire and train new workers on-the-job while ensuring the forestry worker skill set is handed down to the next generation.

Expand our innovative wood-products sector by addressing regulatory and capital barriers hampering the growth of engineered wood production and work with other ministers to ensure public projects prioritize the use of BC wood.

- Increasing engineered wood production may allow us to recover fibre currently left behind in our harvesting operations by creating value for fibre we haven't used in the past.
- Continuing to promote the use of BC forest products in public projects to improve our society's understanding and appreciation of the forest industry responsible for those forest products.

Work with the Minister of Indigenous Relations, First Nations and communities to modernize land-use planning and sustainably manage BC's ecosystems, rivers, lakes, watersheds, forests and old growth.

- The TLA strives to build mutually beneficial First Nations partnerships by acknowledging First Nations rights and title and engaging First Nations leadership and their communities.

- Provincial forests are managed by registered professionals through a paradigm of professional reliance. Forest professionals are stewards of the forest resource and are just as legally accountable for their actions as doctors or lawyers in their respective professions. Not only are our forests professionally managed, there is an arm's length oversight body—the Forest Practices Board—that provides guidance and critiques of operations as well as serving as a mechanism for investigating concerns expressed by the public.
- Furthermore, a majority of BC forests are managed under various sustainable forest management certifications which include independent third-party verification.

Our new provincial government's priorities listed above focus on accessing the potential prosperity of our forest resource and creating jobs. We want our forests to provide jobs while being managed in a sustainable way. While the financial statements from BC's publicly traded forest products producers convey strong prosperity with record earnings, they conceal a painful contradiction. Contractors and the communities they live and work within are not seeing the current prosperity one might think exists if you just read the financial headlines.

Contractors are leaving the forest industry today. (See the article about W.D. Moore Logging closing on page 22.) In the last 24 months, we have seen two incidences where communities were dramatically impacted by the influence of a single forest tenure holder. There are some 52,000 jobs created by the forest resource industry in BC and tens of thousands more indirectly supported. All these jobs rely on independent timber harvesting contractors because they harvest 90 per cent or more of the timber in this province.

So as the new government works hard to address their priorities and create the prosperity we both believe exists in the forest industry, the TLA also asks Premier Horgan and his ministers to address the current imbalance in prosperity in our forests.▲

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