



## MAKING SENSE OF A DIFFICULT SITUATION

I struggled to write this report because I needed to talk about two very different things that, in my mind, completely contradicted each other.

First, I'd just heard that W.D. Moore Logging was closing its doors. Founded in 1928, this company spanned three generations and was the heart of Winter Harbour, a small town on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island. I've known the family for a long time and served on the TLA board with Graham Lasure, the third generation to run W.D. Moore Logging. As an owner of a multi-generational logging company myself, this hit me really hard.

I worry for the community of Winter Harbour. Timber harvesting contractors are the economic backbone of BC's rural communities. They live and work in them and give back to the community in so many ways. I know Graham's family graded the road, ran the solid waste facilities and helped out with machines and gravel for new developments—they went above and beyond what most companies do. More than that though, they were a part of the fabric of Winter Harbour's community and history. Graham and his family are the kind of people we need more of in our communities—not less of.

Several times recently, I've talked to people about the high costs and tight margins in timber harvesting. Anyone not in the industry immediately assumes we're cutting corners in safety and environmental protection to make ends meet. Reputable and well-established companies will not sacrifice safety programs and environmental protection to make ends meet. What is sacrificed again and again are the profits. Contractors take on high-risk and high-capital investments and they deserve a fair return.

Second, I'd recently signed-off on the TLA's new "Forestry Feeds My Family" bumper sticker that was mailed out

with every issue of this magazine. I love this sticker and there was overwhelming support for its creation from both the TLA board and our working committees. This enthusiasm for the bum-

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per stickers shows me there is still lots of pride among loggers for the work we do and the jobs we create. We're running a social media contest this fall encouraging people to show us where they stuck their sticker and I anticipate a strong response!

So how do I reconcile these two things? A three-generation logging contractor closes its doors and a contractor-led association produces a bumper sticker proudly stating they feed their families with forestry dollars? I think it speaks to the industry's history and our resiliency.

Many people think of the mills and licensees as "the industry." What often gets missed are the forest workers who don't report to a big office, or fixed location like a mill, and spend most of their time in the bush. But these forest workers are out there busting their asses to ensure the licensees and the mills have the logs they need so we in fact have an industry. *They* are the heart and soul of our industry.

The TLA is celebrating its 75th anniversary next year and we'll still be here 75 years from now. Currently, contractors are struggling to be sustainable and many have left the industry exhausted.

But we're still looking for solutions and we're finding them. Why are we doing this? Because forestry feeds our families today and we need it to feed our families tomorrow too.

Finally, I couldn't end this report without mentioning the terrible circumstances in the Interior. I thank all the fire fighters who worked hard and long to get the wildfires under control and protect Interior cities and towns. Our hearts go out to the communities, families and loggers affected by this year's devastating fire season. Looking forward, TLA will watch closely how these fires have impacted short- and long-term fibre supply and what that means for independent logging contractors in the Interior.♣

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