



CONTINUING THE 75-YEAR TRADITION OF ADVOCACY FOR TLA MEMBER COMPANIES

What a time to become the 41st TLA president!

At our convention in January, the theme was “Standing Tall & Strong for 75 Years” as we celebrated all that the Association has achieved since 1943. For anyone who didn’t read “The TLA: 75 Years of Innovation & Advocacy” in the last issue, I encourage you to go back and read it. The TLA has been punching above its weight, fighting for proper forest management, and opposing corporate and state monopolies from the start.

As part of our 75th anniversary, we published a commemorative book, *Timber Forever!* and launched it at the convention. I’m proud to say every TLA member company received a copy as a gift of thanks for their support. There is no doubt the TLA is a member-driven organization and the membership’s pride is reflected both within the pages of the book and in the number of members who wanted extra copies.

As provincial forest industry advocates, we must always be aware of the environment we operate in. For some trade associations (not necessarily forestry), membership is waning as their members simply don’t see their value. This is clearly not the case with the TLA. Our membership numbers have grown significantly over the last two years. Today we’re about to hit 500, as contractors across the province join the TLA to show support for the work we do on their behalf. The strength of the Association and the value it provides to its members is a testament to the work of past TLA Boards and the leadership of my recent predecessors.

With the Coast Forest Products Association (CFPA) closing in April, significant change to the coastal industry advocacy scene is expected. CFPA has long been the voice of coastal forest products producers and a force to be reckoned with. Some CFPA members are expected to join the Council of

Forest Industries (COFI), the predominant forest products producer advocate in BC, which over the last 24 years was primarily an Interior-focused organization. Now that the major licensees and forest products producers from different regions will be represented by one association, the forest policy advocacy dynamic in BC is sure to change as well.

I’d like to leave the association even stronger than it is today. So the Board and I will develop a new strategic plan. As vice president, I saw how useful the last strategic plan was in shaping the TLA’s work. Whenever new advocacy issues arose or when existing challenges took an unexpected turn, we were able to go back and reference the plan for guidance. The strategic planning process also allows us the opportunity to look back over what we’ve achieved and make sure our vision still reflects the TLA membership’s needs. An all-day strategic planning meeting right after an all-day board meeting is a big time commitment for our board members who are all volunteers and run their own businesses. I thank them for making the time to take part in this planning session.

Despite the development of a new strategic plan, it is abundantly clear that my top advocacy priority will be the Contractor Sustainability Review. The last Executive spent a great deal of time shepherding the Review through a change in government and helping George Abbott coordinate discussions with over 140 independent logging contractors across BC. Now we need to make sure the Review becomes public and its recommendations are implemented. BC’s logging contractors are up against the wall and they are depending on us to level the playing field between contractors and licensees.

Many are now feeling the pinch of the provincial labour shortage in the forest industry. When I started in forestry, you just had to show up in the marshaling

yard to get your start and that’s what I did. Today, things are done differently and, for a lot of reasons, it’s harder to attract people to forestry. I know we have more seats in contractors’ equipment than people to operate them and this serious issue needs to be addressed.

Being the TLA president isn’t a job you do alone. I’d like to welcome Bill Nelson to the executive as vice president. Bill brings a great deal of on-the-ground knowledge with him as a partner in Holbrook Dyson Logging. Bill works as a project manager running two camp operations. We all know logging project management means every time you solve one problem, two more crop up, so TLA advocacy should be a cakewalk for him.

I’d also like to thank Jacqui Beban for her strong leadership as president over the past two years. She achieved a great deal including the Contractor Sustainability Review which was announced and completed during her term. I look forward to working with both Jacqui and Bill, our new 2018 Board of Directors and the TLA staff led by our Executive Director David Elstone.

While one of my greatest joys is to go run my grapple yarder, I know I have to be available to the membership. If you have any comments, issues or feedback, please reach out to me.▲

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