



LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

Having a vision is important. A large cornerstone of the NDP government's vision for the forest industry is to increase logs to domestic manufacturing and increase the value-added sector, which resonates strongly with the general public. And in many respects, this vision conceptually should align with the TLA members as long as it results in the same or increased amount of timber harvesting.

Unfortunately, over the last six months and for the near future, timber harvesting is far from seeing any increases. Our industry—coastal and interior—is in crisis. There is an immense amount of suffering and frustration in the forestry sector today; the TLA Board of Directors and myself are empathetic to it and are indeed experiencing this first hand as business owners ourselves. On such a somber note, this will be my last letter as president of the TLA with my two years in this role coming to an end this month.

So much has quickly changed since we finalized the TLA's updated strategic plan when I became president in mid-2018. Market weakness was growing, but the impacts to timber supply, the enduring coastal strike and the depth of the market change were hard to foresee. Nor was it clear how the government's own vision for the sector would manifest itself with the Coast Revitalization Initiative, the soon-to-be-expected results of the Old Growth Strategic Review and Interior Forest Renewal initiatives. Fortunately, the TLA's strategic plan and vision continue to remain relevant through all this turmoil and has kept our efforts on course.

I am proud of what has been accomplished over the last two years and I am thankful for a supportive Board of

Directors and energetic TLA staff. One key aim was to provide member value by growing our membership in the northern Interior. The strategic impact of this allowed us to state that we represent the sector across the province, which came with increased responsibility. Acknowledging our Interior membership by ensuring we provide member value wherever our members operate has been vital to fulfilling our objectives.

Last spring, the TLA held its first membership networking event in the Interior in Prince George. Our advocacy has resulted in many new Interior contractors joining over the last two years, including a show of support from three new Interior community members. I believe this shift to encompass the broader provincial level will be instrumental in advancing our members' interests.

The biggest advocacy issue has been the Contractor Sustainability Review (CSR) and we have had significant successes in getting government to address it, although the changes we hoped for have not been brought to completion as of yet.

I am pleased the TLA led the way in getting the Hourly Equipment Rate Sheet project launched and completed in partnership with TimberTracks™ and support from the Interior Logging Association. This document should rest in the back pocket of every contractor. Knowing what your equipment is worth and having that reference is instrumental in advancing a sustainable contracting community in this province.

Our advocacy has materialized with continuous efforts to keep the membership engaged with calls for action, from keeping you informed on CSR developments, to supporting your submissions on the Old Growth Strategic Review.

An aware and engaged membership is what makes this Association strong. I would like to acknowledge all of those who have contributed their time to help advance the interests of the TLA membership at so many tables where the TLA represents the contracting community.

Advancing support for relationships with First Nations has been another strategic objective, which has even greater urgency and relevance than ever before. As we seek to understand where Bill 41's support of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will take us, the TLA has sought to develop tools and raise awareness of First Nations issues in the context of forestry. This has been valuable work and I hope the momentum continues.

The role of the TLA president is rewarding and challenging. I would like to express my gratitude for the support that I have received from my fellow executive, with Bill Nelson as vice president and Jacqui Beban as the immediate past president. Jacqui's long tenure with the TLA as a director comes to an end this January. With the natural progression as vice president to be elected to the role of president, I know the TLA will be well guided by Bill through the rough times ahead.

The TLA has followed its strategic plan and made course corrections along the way. The government has their plan and I hope Premier Horgan can see that how they are attempting to achieve their vision requires course correction too, because frankly, at this time, unintended consequences have arrived.▲

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