



## WE'RE GOING TO SEE JOHN!

On September 25, 2019, I was lucky enough to participate in what would be a historic day for our industry. The first text started at 4 am to let me know that logging trucks that were part of the BC Logging Convoy had passed through Quesnel. The next text at 6:30 am said there were more than 100 at 70 Mile House.

Trucks were en route to Merritt from as far north as MacKenzie and Burns Lake. I thought to myself, it's going to be a good day. I made my way to Merritt that morning along with ILA Board Directors to meet at the marshalling point. We were there to support the vision of many individuals who wanted to send a message of support to the mayors of forest dependent

to all that were involved, along with offers of reduced hotel rates and money to assist in their fuel costs.

The time to move on was drawing near so Howard McKinnon and Frank Etchart addressed the group to provide clear and concise instructions; their message was of safety and professionalism. ILA Chairman, Randy Spence, shared words of support and I shared gratitude to organizers, participants, and everyone who supported us. Chiefs Lee Spahan and Aaron Sumexheltza representing the Five Nicola Bands offered words of encouragement and support for our journey and also let the group know that they were sending a letter to the Premier in support of our

stop. Whether we were travelling through Abbotsford, Langley or as we took the exit onto Hastings Street, the signs, banners and crowds continued.

The original plan was for the majority of the trucks to marshal at the PNE grounds and only eight would continue on to the Convention Centre to deliver the message; however somewhere along the way that plan had changed.

Fast forward to the Convention Centre where approximately 1,000 people lined the streets as the first of over 400 trucks arrived trucks arrived, and they were met with cheers loud enough to drown out the sounds of their horns. It took approximately four hours for all of the trucks to pass by and the crowd stayed and cheered every one of them. Those that parked were swarmed by the media.

The Vancouver Police Department escorted the remaining trucks to a marshalling point and from there many of the drivers made their way back to the Convention Centre. They were greeted and congratulated by complete strangers for what they had accomplished that day. Hands were shaken and in some cases a few tears were shed.

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communities who would be gathered in Vancouver later that day for the Union of BC Municipalities Convention. The result would be a convoy of over 400 logging trucks coming together to share in our message to Premier Horgan that rural communities in British Columbia matter.

We arrived in Merritt at 9 am and already there were at least 50 trucks and hundreds of people gathered around waiting for further instructions. Soon after you could hear a symphony of air horns (which would become a familiar sound) as a row of trucks came down the Coquihalla highway north from Kamloops and pulled into Merritt. The support that had already been shown to the drivers as they made their way here was overwhelming. People had been standing on the side of the highway as early as 2 am waving flashlights and signs to show their support.

It was no different in Merritt as a steady stream of local businesses continued to deliver food, coffee, water and well wishes

industry and the message that we were delivering today.

At approximately 10 am, the first of many trucks started to roll out of Merritt and the horns began again. Hundreds of people lined the side of the highway or stood on top of the overpass, waving signs along with Canadian and British Columbian flags. Those participating in the convoy could only continue to sound their horns as their mere words were not enough.

The support for the convoy continued as we made our way down the Coquihalla highway. Every overpass from Merritt to Hope had people waving signs and cheering on the group. In Hope, the convoy grew as it was joined by trucks that had travelled the Fraser Canyon or Hope-Princeton highway. We were now over 240 trucks and as we continued on to Vancouver, more trucks asked to join our group to show their support. As we travelled deeper into the Lower Mainland the support from the general public didn't

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