



AN INTERCONNECTED INDUSTRY

I hope this message finds you, your family members and employees healthy and well.

Our world has certainly continued to present challenges. The interconnectedness of the forest sector locally, domestically and globally has been highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis. A four-month, worldwide downturn has had many different effects that along with the challenges of returning to work after the strike, dealing with snow, and suffering downtime due to export and blocking issues, has made for a rocky first half of 2020 for many contractors. It cannot be overstated how interconnected the industry is. It reminds us that solutions need to be universal and for the betterment of the industry as a whole.

On the bright side, forestry was deemed an essential service in British Columbia and no doubt will be leading the province towards economic recovery. As world markets begin to open up, those that are prepared and adaptive will have the best chance of capitalizing on the demand.

It is ironic that before COVID-19 there had been mounting pressure on all resources—or “first dollar” industries. It seems that this crisis puts into perspective the importance of our resource industries not just for economic reasons, but also for the products they provide, such as from the forest sector, including surgical and safety masks, and toilet paper. Resource businesses that create tangible products that provide safety, or build or manufacture, are the businesses that will need to lead the way out of this worldwide downturn.

Logging contractors have spent a lot of time defending our resource industries; it's possible we could be entering a time when the people of BC can look at “first dollar” industries for what they are—the economic backbone of the province.

In an effort to support the forest industry during COVID-19, the provincial

government has provided a three-month stumpage deferral to help get the industry back up and running. Stumpage will still need to be paid but the deferral should help free up capital in the short term for start-up. It remains to be seen how this will work on the ground.

One of the highest priorities from the TLA's latest strategic plan was contractor

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sustainability. It was a big undertaking and has been underway for more than five years; and was the primary focus for former TLA executive director, David Elstone. Over the years, it involved government conducting the Contractor Sustainability Review followed by their 13 recommendations and culminating with joint recommendations from the logging associations representing licensees and contractors, which were presented to government in early April 2020. Government is expected to move forward with the recommendations being written into legislative draft, which are to be read and (hopefully) passed into law in the fall sitting.

I'd like to thank all those who put their many hours of time and energy into this work. Its outcome should see a level playing field for licensee and contractor relations where both sides share the incentive to reach a negotiated conclusion. If an arbitrated conclusion is required, it should be an equally fair and uncomfortable process for both sides. A fairly-negotiated conclusion is the best conclusion.

On the subject of safety in the world of COVID-19, we made the difficult decision to cancel the TLA golf tournament this past June. While we would have been able to golf at a social distance, and Ron Coulson and the Crown Isle crew were prepared to host us as best they

could, the Provincial Health Officer's restrictions wouldn't have allowed us to hold the same tournament that we have come to expect and enjoy. We hope to see everyone again next year.

Additionally, the TLA staff have been working from home and we've been hosting our board meetings virtually. I have to admit I am not personally a fan of

video conferencing but it's getting the job done and keeping people safe and right now that's what is most important.

As you'll no doubt notice, this issue of *Truck LoggerBC* magazine is a few pages less than normal; this is also a reflection of the times we are experiencing. I know businesses are making tough decisions right now about where to allocate their advertising dollars, so on behalf of the TLA I want to thank those who have stepped up and continued their support of the magazine. For many people it is a must-read cover to cover and it continues to be an excellent source of knowledge and advocacy. It doesn't happen without support though, and we all owe thanks to those who continue to back the publication.

Looking ahead to later this summer, the executive, board directors and TLA staff are looking forward to developing and updating the next strategic plan, and sharing it with you in the fall.

Stay safe at work and home.▲

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