

LETTER TO THE TRUCK LOGGERS ASSOCIATION

By Premier John Horgan

Photo courtesy of the NDP



British Columbia's wood fuels our economy. It sustains forestry workers, families and communities. And it keeps our province moving forward.

The forest industry has had some challenging times over the past 18 months, from the effects of climate change, to trade disputes, to the COVID-19 pandemic. But in recent months we have also seen some very positive signs, including increased demand for lumber and higher prices. We are starting to see a healthier industry and a better bottom line for companies. Our government will keep working with partners to strengthen and diversify the sector, so it can continue to sustain us for generations to come.

In 2019, in response to mill closures, we responded quickly with two new programs that provide direct support to forestry workers and their families. Our regionally driven renewal of the Interior forest industry, and our Coast Forest Sector Revitalization Initiative, will help us develop competitive, sustainable futures for forest companies, workers and communities that depend on these industries.

Through the Logging Contractor Sustainability Review, we have identified a common ground for productive conversations between contractors and licensees, where all sides can reach fair agreements. We are moving forward with the policy and regulation changes put forward by George Abbott and Dan Miller,

to help make sure that contractors and businesses have stable incomes.

In the fall, we announced a new, holistic approach to protecting old-growth forests. This approach will allow us to break from the divisive practices

Operations and Rural Development. Katrine is in her fifth term and has a strong connection to the community and, as a rancher, to the land. She is no stranger to leading in challenging times, and recently served as Minister of Children and Family

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of the past and bring together Indigenous people, labour, industry and environmental groups to implement the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review. We will work together to protect further old-growth stands—in addition to the 353,000 hectares we protected in September—and support the thousands of forestry workers that rely on good jobs in their communities.

Our market-based stumpage system is designed to provide stability against volatility in the market. Our government consulted with industry on moving from quarterly to monthly stumpage pricing adjustments and found the consensus was to stick with the current system at this time. Over the coming months, we will continue to work with industry on finding new ways to improve the market pricing system.

We know BC's forest policies are trade compliant, and we're very concerned about the continued effect US punitive tariffs have on our forestry sector. Our government will continue to work with the federal government to bring an end to unfair US duties on softwood lumber exports. We will continue to fight for, and defend, our forestry sector and the thousands of hardworking people who depend on it.

In November, I appointed Kootenay West MLA Katrine Conroy as Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource

Development. I have tasked Minister Conroy with focusing on rural communities as we advance our COVID-19 response and build a strong economic recovery. She will work to ensure we have a sustainable future for forest communities, while advancing recommendations of the old-growth panel and our CleanBC commitments.

The future of forestry is bright in British Columbia. Our government will be focusing on mass timber and creating opportunities to transition the forestry sector to high-value over high-volume production. This shift will create sustainable forestry jobs and support thousands of families around the province. It is more important than ever that people have stable, good-paying jobs they can rely on.

As we move forward, we will continue to work with First Nations, labour and industry to get the most value out of every log, grow our manufacturing sector, promote innovative products in markets around the world, and create good jobs in local communities.

We are proud to work with you to move the industry forward. Thank you. 🌲