



Date and Time: Thursday May 22, 2014 | 9:20 a.m.

Meeting Room: Les Étoiles Room - Hotel LeSoliel, 567 Hornby St., Vancouver BC V6C 2E8

Re: Area-Based Forest Tenures Consultation and Discussion Paper

Dear Mr. Snetsinger,

I am here as a representative of the Wilderness Committee to voice our opposition to the expansion of Tree Farm Licenses (TFLs) in BC.

Twice before, on behalf of the Wilderness Committee, I have made submissions opposing TFL expansion.

In 1988 I called on then Forest Minister Dave Parker to release a map showing the areas of BC that were being sought at that time by the timber companies for new TFL tenures. Mr. Parker was travelling the province holding public meetings to discuss the idea of TFL expansion. Though we never did see a map of the areas being considered for TFL expansion, the over-whelming public opposition displayed at the meetings was enough to convince the government of the day not to go forward with a massive expansion of TFLs in BC.

Many years later – in the summer of 2012 – I made a presentation to an all-party committee looking at various aspects of forest management in BC. On the issue of shifting to more area-based tenures, such as TFLs, I stated that our organization would see the expansion of TFLs as transferring greater control of public forests to logging companies.

I stated that this would be concerning to us because of what is happening on the privately owned forest lands on Vancouver Island, where the logging companies already have the type of control they now seek over public forests. On the private lands, we see greater levels of raw log exports and worse logging practices. We certainly do not see giving more power to timber companies as the answer to either job creation or environmental protection.

At the 2012 all-party committee meeting I called on the BC government – in consultation with citizens, communities, as well as the federal government and First Nations' governments – to:

1. Ban raw log exports to protect future jobs;
2. Ensure that access to timber is linked to creation of BC wood manufacturing jobs;
3. Enact stand-alone endangered species legislation to ensure that BC's wildlife is protected;

4. Greatly expand and strengthen BC's protected area system to ensure the protection of remaining old-growth forests, the health and recovery of the landscape and the protection of other values and industries such as drinking water supply and the fishing and tourism industries; and

5. Increase the budget and workforce of the BC government's on-the-ground staff in forestry, environment and parks to ensure proper inventory and protection of our increasingly stressed natural environment.

At the all-party committee presentation, I submitted three pamphlets that our organization has produced – one on conserving BC species at risk, another on protecting ancient forests and a third on expanding the provincial protected areas system.

In 2013, after the completion of the all-party committee work the BC government did attempt to expand TFLs, but then appeared to step away from these plans in the face of widespread public opposition.

But now the BC government has re-launched its attempt to increase the power of large timber companies, and is now collecting information on the public reaction to this proposal.

This time the process is even less democratic than the last two attempts to expand TFLs. Gone are the days where people got to meet their elected leaders face-to-face, or even to hear what their neighbours had to say in a large public meeting venue in their own community.

Now we have a kind of fake public process – a far cry from the wide-open public meetings of the 1980s.

So once again, I would like to present the three pamphlets that I gave to the all-party committee several years ago.

And I would like to say – one more time – that the way to provide a secure future for BC's forest-dependent communities is NOT to grant the big timber companies more powers over our public forests. Instead, we need to shift our focus away from corporate profits and towards the well-being of the forest ecosystem and the well-being of the communities and people who depend on it.

Over the past quarter century I have seen timber companies with far too much power log far too fast in a manner that has damaged the lands, waters and wildlife resources of the province. This situation has left forest-dependent communities all over the province in a much poorer state than they would have otherwise been, had proper forest management been enforced by government. First Nations communities have been particularly hard hit, with important fishing, hunting and cultural sites lost due to industrial logging practices.

But things can always be made worse. Granting expanded TFLs to strengthen large timber companies' hold on the forests would certainly accomplish this.

Thanks for hearing me out.

Joe Foy | National Campaign Director, Wilderness Committee