

Submission to: Special Committee on Timber Supply

July 19, 2012

The mixed forests of the southeast portion of the province have received significant pine beetle attack in many areas. While not as significant as northern stands the death of these stands do impact the communities that rely on the forest for both timber and non-timber values.

Our area, the upper Columbia Headwaters, have many small towns and hamlets throughout this area. A contraction within the forest sector over time has caused a change in the workforce who now depends on the tourism sector. This turnover has placed different values than those from traditional timber harvest on the forest immediately adjacent to tourist based operations and communities within the area.

As a result of beetle impact, high wildfire interface concerns and tourism needs the forests in the upper Columbia require both sustainable and a variety of forest management options for the future. The days of having the large capacity mill spewing out 2x4's will not work for what has evolved in this area. While forestry operations remain a component of the community structure how and what we remove from the forest has to be done in different ways from the past.

The Working Roundtable on Forestry and the Healthy Forests – Healthy Communities dialogues both speak about the need for “vibrant and sustainable” forestry to provide benefits for current and future generations and strong communities. Both speak to the need for more influence by communities on decisions being made about local forests, more diverse economic development opportunities, the need to expand the Community Forest program along with area based forest tenure options and that forest policy should reflect forest attributes and socio-economic circumstances unique to different areas of the Province. We believe a Community Forest tenure provides the opportunity to better access the highly constrained areas of the Timber Harvesting Land Base, which major tenure holders may not have the ability or desire to manage. The interest area the Columbia Headwaters Community Forest Association has identified for a community forest tenure is just such an area, with VQO, community watersheds, front country and back country issues.

This Special Committee on Timber Supply is being looked upon as a chance for the public and communities to offer ways to make changes that will work for our future. For us here to continue to harvest the way we have, even in the most recent past, would see our tourism dependent areas diminish greatly. We have to address this in order to protect this investment, broaden the scope of our local forest industry and look for broader use and management of the forest base.

With the recent purchase of Tembec tenure by Canfor, one major licensee now controls 98% of the total replaceable forest timber available for harvest within the Invermere TSA. plus ownership of a TFL. This type of control places a strangle hold on competition and offers little to no opportunity for advancement of other forest prospects or broaden the use of the forest land base, unless government is prepared to step in. By this we mean creating tenure for small business opportunities in both the timber and non-timber models. We urge you to consider the expansion of the Community Forest tenure, as this type of tenure provides small business opportunities and good forest management practices in highly constrained areas of the working forest. Government must also assure there is a tomorrow for the communities that now rely on a tourism industry that has evolved and continues to do so.

As a locally based group we offer the following recommendations for the upper Columbia area that will give more management of the local forest land base and position our community for a better future in forest resource management:

- Establishment of a Community Forest as proposed by the Columbia Headwaters Community Forest Association
- Broader management options in both timber and non-timber values for the local community.
- Better utilization of harvested timber to create options for the bio-energy, manufacturing and small business models. This will also help replace what has been lost within the beetle affected stands.

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