



Resource Municipalities
COALITION

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Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
PO Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

November 22, 2021

RE: BC Old Growth

Minister Conroy,

The Resource Municipalities Coalition (RMC) advocates for responsible resource development as we believe it sustains communities by addressing impacts on ecosystems as well as cumulative impacts to a healthy natural environment and to citizens by ensuring the provision of effective social services that improve quality of life while building a sustainable future. It is based on these values that we recognize the importance of the forestry sector and more specifically old-growth, on our natural environment and quality of life for all British Columbians.

Old-growth alone contributes \$ 3.5 billion to BC's annual GDP and provides employment to approximately 38,000 workers throughout the province, as reported by COFI in March of 2021. This contribution to the provinces economy is significant as forestry contributes an additional 187 jobs provincially for every 100 jobs within the sector. It is the economic spin-off of this industry that further supports and drives an economy capable of withstanding the impacts of a global pandemic.

Old-growth forests are a critical part of British Columbia's ecosystem, and as identified within the province's Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy is a part of the province's multitude of diverse ecosystems throughout this great land. The diversity of our ecosystems is a critical piece to ensuring a long-term sustainable forest sector and while climate change will most certainly impact these individual ecosystems, government must take a leading role in ensuring strategies are developed that are balanced.

The RMC recognizes the value of protecting 2.6 million hectares of old-growth to support the healthy natural environment of British Columbia, however, we are concerned with what appears to be an unbalanced decision that does not consider the socio-economic impacts of this action by the province. This is supported by an unreasonable expectation to consult with 204 First Nations within 30 days to develop a strategy around old-growth forests.

(2)

The RMC strongly encourages the province to recognize that 30 days is not proper engagement with 204 First Nations on a matter with the significance of old-growth, as the cumulative impacts of any decision around this subject requires a province wide implementation strategy that is evidence based and balanced.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lori Ackerman
City of Fort St John



Mayor Rob Fraser
District of Taylor

Keith Bertrand

Mayor Keith Bertrand
District of Tumbler Ridge



Mayor Joan Atkinson
District of Mackenzie



Mayor Gary Foster
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality



Executive Director Mike Whalley
Resource Municipalities Coalition

CC: Premier John Horgan, Province of British Columbia