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Doug Donaldson,
Minister of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development,
Victoria, B.C. FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Sir;

RE: NO LOGGING CROWN LAND ON BOWEN

I am opposed to any consideration of industrial logging on Bowen Island.

First, I am appalled that the mismanagement of the provincial forestry resource has come to this: wanting to log right up against residential areas, ecological reserves and regional parks. If trees have not regenerated in previously cut areas, and you have run out of this renewable resource in areas that are manageable, a safe distance from homes and businesses and have already been altered by roads and staging areas that is a critical issue of gross mismanagement over a very long period of time.

Second, it is astounding that industrial logging is being considered as even remotely viable. We are in a global crisis over climate chaos [well beyond merely climate "change"] and the suggestion to remove large swaths of trees with grossly inadequate regeneration is beyond unintelligent. Today the proposed cut blocks act as our watersheds [the same as the Capilano, Seymour and Coquitlam watersheds for Vancouver] but we are on an island. We can't go a little farther in any direction to get more water. Clear cuts can only add to the crisis and are the extreme opposite of carbon neutral.

The issue of water is at the top of my list of major concerns. Residential areas lie at the base in every direction around each of the proposed cut blocks. I hope you don't need to be told that the uphill forests are fundamental to retaining and slowly releasing moisture into both ground water sources and the deep aquifers. Industrial, or unsustainable logging of 1400 hectares of forest, regardless of over how long a period of time, will cause enormous upheaval to watershed capacity for several generations, possibly forever. The island has been logged in the past but other than clear cuts on private land, with extensive damage to water and habitat, the crown land, our difficult to access mountain tops, have not been logged for over 100 years. A century ago, logging practices were very different, and it cannot be said that the damage even then was not considerable and has only just recovered. Some old stream beds have never recovered. Plus, we fear fire almost more than earthquakes as a real threat with our annual summer drought. We cannot allow any damage or reduction in water retention capacity anywhere on Bowen.

The economy of Bowen, before any settlement and since, but in miniscule areas compared to this proposal, may have benefitted from logging, but today visible logging would have disastrous economic consequences. Tourism fuels the majority of our commercial efforts. Scars visible

from the Bowen ferry as it approaches, the large ferries travelling almost hourly around the south of Bowen to Nanaimo and the north to the Sunshine Coast, the considerable car traffic on the Sea to Sky Highway, plus all the private boaters and small airplane traffic in Howe Sound, indeed huge jets often fly low enough to see: the scars from logging would be an ugly disincentive to visitors. Ferry overloads, delays in ferry loading, extended trucks taking up too much space on our narrow roads, plus noise and dust, damage to the roads and increased risk of speed and accidents have been of real and considerable concern with much smaller logging projects, and would further disenchant tourists. And, the majority of visitors and residents value the forest trails and the quiet that is typically found in all areas of forest - both park and crown lands. Destruction of these amenities would have a strong negative effect on many aspects of our local economy (real estate sales, visitor services of all kinds, commerce, event attendance) and would nullify the hard work and investments that have been committed to all these interests.

Noise and pollution are also horrendous considerations. Many visitors and residents have work in Vancouver but come to Bowen for the clean air and quiet peace. Blasting to put in access roads, then chainsaws, the large machinery used to move logs away from the cut, trucks and possibly helicopters used to move the logs off the island, and all of their fumes and exhaust, plus dust, gravel and other debris, the sound of falling trees and increased traffic noise persistent over years would change the entire atmosphere of this tranquil and calm place. In the past such factors have created considerable stress for people living near areas of large scale logging and development but those projects have had far shorter timelines and there are neighbourhoods and new residents at the end of the process. There would be nothing to prize at the end of 20 years of clear cut: instead we'll be overrun with homeless wildlife and have higher risk of landslides and blowdowns.

This process has brought forest management from off the page to the top of the local agenda and forced us to consider the issue. I sincerely hope you will be convinced at the outset that the community is offering a resounding "NO" to industrial logging. The ideal solution would be to remove Bowen Island from the provincial inventory so that we do not have to deal with this issue now or ever again. Once that is accomplished, perhaps then we can and should examine forest rejuvenation, best practices and sustainable logging but without the fear of such irremediable destruction.

Sincerely,

Judith Gedye

CC: * Premier John Horgan - premier@gov.bc.ca

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