

July 18, 2017

The Honourable Doug Donaldson, MLA  
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development  
P.O. Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

**Re: Concerns regarding potential for industrial logging on Bowen Island under draft FSP 643 – Salish FDU**

Dear Minister:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

As a resident of Bowen Island, I am writing to express concern about the possibility of industrial logging on the island under draft Forest Stewardship Plan 643 for the Chilliwack Natural Resource District. Stated simply, Bowen Island is not a suitable place for industrial logging. I ask you to intervene with BCTS to have Bowen Island removed from draft FSP 643.

I have perused the draft FSP 643 documents that have been published by BCTS for consultation ([https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/TCH/external/!publish/FSP/Chilliwack/FSP\\_643/](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/TCH/external/!publish/FSP/Chilliwack/FSP_643/)).

Referring to the Backgrounder, “planning and consultation play a major role in Chinook’s business practices”. The 60-day consultation period on the FSP does not seem adequate in the Bowen Island context. I had difficulty understanding the implications of the draft FSP for the Salish FDU on Bowen. There appears to be little information in the plan relating to this FDU, compared to others in the region covered by the draft FSP. It is worth noting in this context that I hold a Master of Science degree in protected area management. If I cannot understand the proposition that I am being asked to comment on from reading these documents, is it reasonable to expect community members who do not have land management training or experience, in an area with no recent history of logging, to understand the implications of the FSP, form an opinion and comment within a 60-day period?

Nevertheless, despite concerns about the consultation, I would like to offer the following initial comments on the documents. I will largely confine my comments to the Salish FDU area around Mount Collins, as this is the area with which I am most familiar, but similar concerns would apply across the FDU areas on Bowen.

It appears from the documents and from information provided to the Bowen Island municipality by BCTS that the Salish Forest Development Unit (FDU) areas cover more than 25% of the Bowen Island area. I am puzzled by the decision to include

Bowen at all in draft FSP 643, because it does not appear to have been included in the mapping of FDUs in the recently expired FSP for the Chilliwack Natural Resource District

([https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/tch/external/!publish/FSP/Chilliwack/BCTS\\_DCK\\_FSP.pdf](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/tch/external/!publish/FSP/Chilliwack/BCTS_DCK_FSP.pdf)).

From the Backgrounder: "These forestry activities provide economic benefits to local businesses through the purchase of goods and services. Timber sales support communities by making wood available to loggers, wood processors and other forestry businesses of varying size, including major licensees. BCTS contracts annually with local and regional suppliers for forestry work, road and bridge construction, and reforestation activities."

I am sceptical about the economic benefits that would be provided by logging on Bowen. As far as I am aware, we do not have any local logging companies on the island. It is also worth noting that local skilled trades with whom we have been doing business for household and garden renovations tend to have waiting lists to begin projects, and in many cases Bowen residents are forced to hire skilled trades from the mainland. This suggests to me that significant economic benefits of any logging on Bowen would be transferred off-island - and indeed, demand for labour for logging activities might worsen delays for Bowen residents trying to complete projects requiring skilled trades.

Far from providing economic benefit to the community, I am concerned that the local economy would be negatively impacted by logging. Many local businesses focus on arts and crafts, health and wellness, hospitality and outdoor pursuits. Tourism is a major source of income for the community. Bowen is marketed as an idyllic destination, quiet and alluring, a welcome escape from the stresses of city life. It is one of the most accessible outdoor destinations for Vancouver residents, being easily reached by public transit at an affordable cost. Our overnight tourism guests are seeking a peaceful getaway, and offerings include activities such as yoga and spiritual retreats. It seems to me that this kind of economic activity could be devastated by industrial logging.

A further economic consideration is potential loss of property value for neighbours who are closest to the FDU areas - and the consequent loss of tax income for the municipality.

According the Backgrounder, "safety is an overriding principle of BC Timber Sales". We live in the Seven Hills area, off the main road to the Mount Collins area. This is a narrow, steeply-sloping and twisting road lined with relatively dense residential development, at a walkable distance from Snug Cove. To the natural hazards of the road itself can be added an hourly rush of ferry traffic, hikers, locals and tourists on bikes and scooters, children at play, wandering dogs, cats and chickens, and a large population of deer. The consequences of adding industrial logging traffic to this mix are frankly unthinkable.

According to the Brochure, "the results and/or strategies in FSPs must be consistent with government objectives, which address values such as cultural heritage resources, soils, water, fish, wildlife, biodiversity, timber, forage, recreation, resource features, and visual quality."

If our uplands are logged, I am concerned for the water supply of neighbours relying on wells and catchments impacted by the FDUs. The possibility of landslides is also a grave concern.

Living close to one of the trailheads, I can affirm that the Mount Collins area has well-established hiking trails. As yet these trails are not well-mapped, and there is no mention of them in the draft FSP. Without access to the technical specifications for trail recognition under an FSP, it seems to me that descriptions of the trails that are already designated in the draft could equally well apply to the Mount Collins trails ("semi-primitive non-roaded, nonmotorized, hiking recreation experience... from which there are spectacular views").

Regarding visual quality, it is a puzzling omission that neither Bowen nor the Salish FDU appears to be mentioned in Appendix 5.5 of the FSP, which refers to scenic areas and viewsheds, given that the island falls under the Islands Trust, is a notable tourist attraction, and is part of the Sea to Sky Highway viewshed. The Salish FDU areas appear to fall in the higher reaches of the island. Any significant logging in these areas is likely to be highly visible from Vancouver, West Vancouver, the Sea-to-Sky Highway and the Sunshine Coast. If so, it would be visible to a large number of regional residents, potentially affecting property values where the view is part of the property premium. It would be visible to an enormous number of tourists, once again potentially impacting Bowen's own tourism revenues, but also damaging the reputation of the province as a green destination. It would also be visible to the many residents of the region who care strongly about the environment. Bowen is readily accessible by public transit from Vancouver - including for environmental activists. Industrial logging activity on Bowen could become a flashpoint, creating reputational risk for BCTS and for the province.

Logging is not part of the contemporary culture on Bowen. It is true that we hold a Logger Sports event, but this does not equate to support for industrial logging. It is important to understand that in this small community, people tend to turn out in large numbers to support local events of all kinds. This is not indicative of anything other than the fact that Bowen is a small island community, and we have to make our own entertainment. I myself attended the Logger Sports event, to cheer on our household contractors - but I disagree strongly with the idea of industrial logging on Bowen.

Many Bowen residents are angry, confused and anxious about what the FSP means for the island, and to what extent they have a say in the outcome. For all the reasons

outlined above, I ask you to intervene with BCTS to have Bowen Island removed from draft FSP 643.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.  
Sincerely,

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CC:

The Honourable George Heyman, MLA, Minister for Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Mr. Jordan Sturdy, MLA

Mr. Andrew Weaver, MLA

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, MP

Mayor & Council, Bowen Island Municipality

Mr. Peter Luckham, Trust Council Chair, Islands Trust

Mr. Neil Carley, General Manager, Parks, Planning and Environment, Metro Vancouver

Mr. Mike Falkiner, Executive Director, BCTS

Mr. Enrique Sanchez, Planning Forester, Chinook Business Area