

Monday, September 27, 2021

Premier John Horgan

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Dear Mr. Horgan,

I am writing to you regarding a current problem here in British Columbia. As a resident of North Vancouver, I highly value the forests I have the privilege of getting to enjoy. Sadly, quite a few of the old growth trees in BC have been approved for logging. These trees, which have existed on this land for over a millennium are irreplaceable. The logging of these old growth trees would not only be terrifically sad, as the trees that have been a part of British Columbia since before there was even a British Columbia are being turned into something as insignificant as a floor board, but it would also have an impact on the environment, since old growth trees remove a significant amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

There are still 3.7 million hectares of unprotected old growth forests in British Columbia. 1 hectare can store 1000 tonnes of carbon. That's 3700000000 (3.7 billion) tonnes, or 3.7 trillion kilograms (8.157094x10<sup>12</sup> pounds) of carbon that those trees are able to absorb from the atmosphere.

Not to mention the excessive force being used on peaceful protesters at Fairy Creek. Yes, I understand that the act of blockading a workplace or a highway is illegal and that a ban of the blockaders was approved by a court decision on April 1st of this year, but is it really necessary to use pepper spray and rubber bullets against people who only want to save their trees? And again, think of the future. As you know, we are currently in the midst of a climate crisis and we need as many ways possible to lower emissions. Since these trees absorb so much carbon, they could be critical in helping with this.

My intention with this letter isn't to complain about your infrastructure, it's to ask for a change. I am asking you to end all old growth logging in British Columbia as a whole. I understand this is an incredibly large thing to ask, but it's crucial in protecting our environment. As you also most likely know, only 23% of BC's forests are old growth. 54,000 hectares of old growth forest are logged each year in British Columbia. If we continue at this rate, all of our unprotected old growth forests will be logged in just over 68.5 years. What will we do after that? Revoke the protected status of more old growth trees? Will it even matter since most of us will be dead or close to it by then, so we can just leave that problem to future generations? If we continue on the path we're on, I'll be 82 by the time all of our unprotected old growth trees are logged. I don't want to have to explain to my grandchildren why in the span of my lifetime we lost more than 3.7 million hectares old growth trees. I don't want to have to see on the news that more old growth trees were revoked their protected status. We are actively cutting down pieces of history, some of which are literally hundreds of years older than the Ottoman Empire, that would have been alive when Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas, that would have lived during the dawn of the Renaissance and the fall of Constantinople, all for money.

I understand that since old growth trees are larger, that have a lot more wood to offer, so they're worth more money. I'm not just writing to you to ask you to prohibit a large part of the logging industry without any solution for the wood that would be lost. My idea for a solution to this problem would be to log more non-old growth trees and plant more in their place to maintain a steady supply of new wood. Yes, this would mean more forest logged in total, but I feel like it would be worth protecting our old growth trees, and if we plant new trees as we log, within a few years the forests would be growing back. I do admit that this could be countered by saying that each year new trees gain old growth status since old growth trees are classified as any tree that is over 250 years old, but if our old growth forests could expand in size, it would not only be a very large achievement, but it would be amazing for the environment. Additionally, if BC bans old growth logging, other provinces will most likely follow in our footsteps with the old growth trees that they have left.

I understand that prohibiting old growth logging in British Columbia altogether would be a very difficult task and it would be nearly impossible to end all of the old growth logging operations currently approved in BC. My suggestion would be to place a ban on all future logging old growth logging operations in BC. This way, we can still cooperate with the logging companies whilst being conscious about our environment. Again, I am asking for you to place a ban on all future old growth logging in BC that has not been approved and to prohibit all future approvals of old growth logging operations. I understand how difficult this task would be but please take into consideration our future and the future of generations to come.

In your campaign, you promised to protect old growth forests. We're waiting.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Dylan Schombing