



Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition presented to many of the Island MLA's in April, 2018. From a legislation perspective, our concern is with the Forestry Acts, the Mining Act and the Water Sustainability Act. Changes are desperately needed. The Mining and Forestry Acts must be amended to state that Water and its sources take precedence over Mining and Forestry. The Water Sustainability Act has few regulations developed. We need effective water governance in place now...not tomorrow...but now!

Following our presentation to Government and a subsequent press release, we were contacted by many groups across the province. Since that time, we have become associated with a provincial group called the BC Coalition for Forestry Reform. The membership of this group is increasing as voices get louder for amendments to the various Acts that must occur.

There is growing concern and evidence among local governments that widespread timber harvesting, specifically clear cutting, is driving significant financial and social costs onto local governments and the citizens they serve. Astonishingly, local government has no legislated role or decision-making power in the planning of timber harvesting, nor indeed in any aspect of timber harvesting including its location, volume, rate of harvest, cumulative impact, etc.

We hear every day how BC's timber supply is dwindling. Yet, cities, towns, municipalities, and regional districts are finding that more and more harvest activity is being performed nearer urban-forest interfaces, within watersheds that are the sole source of drinking water for downstream communities, and within recreation and tourism areas that provide the lifestyle and tourism dollars that municipalities seek to enhance and encourage.

Local governments must now clean up water sources that have become silted and modified by resource extraction activities in their watersheds. Millions of tax dollars are now required to upgrade or build water treatment facilities now needed to treat what used to be pristine water sources.

The negative impact of clear-cutting to recreation and tourism areas has been a growing issue raised by local taxpayers. Yet local governments find themselves unable to make any impact whatsoever on harvesting decisions in these critical local economic and lifestyle resources.

Devastating spring freshet flood events such as occurred in 2017 and 2018 in the Okanagan and Grand Forks are driving massive costs onto local government. Scientific evidence confirms that extensive clear cutting within watersheds is a significant contributing factor to flood events.

Landscape-scale forest fires are also driving costs onto local taxpayers, yet once again local government have no say or role in ensuring forest harvest and management practices within their area are performed in a way that mitigates wildfire risk to local communities.

In summary, local governments are increasingly bearing the risks and costs of forestry activity, but have no regulatory power to ensure industry is not simply offloading their external costs onto local governments.

The Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) is currently being reviewed by the Forest Ministry. We ask that you, personally, apply pressure to the Ministry's involved and that you demand that changes to the Acts be made as follows:

1. Local governments are given the funding and authority to define critical local resources such as watersheds and recreation area, and in doing so ensure these areas are treated differently in legislation compared to "standard" timber supply areas.
2. Local governments have the funding and authority to become actively involved in long term land and resource planning, especially with respect to forest harvesting.
3. Local governments have the authority to influence, modify, and when necessary, prevent forest harvesting that demonstrably increases financial risk to local government
4. Local governments have the authority to influence, modify, and when necessary, prevent forest harvesting that will demonstrably degrade recreation and tourism resources within their area and that all Water sources be protected in perpetuity.

In addition, the Private Managed Forest Land Act requires equivalent amendments in order to protect cities and regional districts across the province where local watersheds are in private hands. Further, the Water Sustainability Act must be supported by regulations that allow for Local Governance of local watersheds. Financing must also be included in order that municipalities and Regional Districts can create committees to protect our drinking water watersheds.

In summary, it is not just our ancient forests that are being affected... It is ALL forests and ALL wildlife and ALL drinking water watersheds. We have attached many pictures of areas grossly affected by clear cut logging. It really must be stopped before there is nothing left for our children, our grandchildren or their children. This insanity must stop!

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact either myself as Chair of VIWWC or BC Coalition for Forestry Reform.

Sincerely,

June Ross

Chair – Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition

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VIWWC- Core Group