



DISTRICT OF TOFINO – OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
PO BOX 9049, Stn. Provincial Government
Victoria BC, V8W9E2

May 11, 2021
File No. COM-02 FLNRORD
FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Conroy,

Re: Support for Expedient and Resourced Implementation of the Old-Growth Strategic Review

On behalf of the District of Tofino Council, I write to you expressing support for the expedient and resourced implementation of the 14 recommendations in the report titled “A Strategic Review of How British Columbia Manages for Old Forests Within its Ancient Ecosystems” (the Strategic Review) written by Registered Professional Foresters Garry Merkel and Al Gorley.

We commend the Minister and Premier Horgan for having publicly committed to implement the Strategic Review in its totality. However, to adequately manage and protect BC’s old forest biodiversity, attributes, values and benefits for future generations, we specifically request an expedient Provincial response to recommendations 6 and 7:

6. Until a new strategy is implemented, defer development in old forests where ecosystems are at very high and near-term risk of irreversible biodiversity loss.
7. Bring management of old forests into compliance with existing provincial targets and guidelines for maintaining biological diversity.

The District of Tofino also adds our voice to concerns that BC Budget 2021 shows no allocated funding toward the implementation of the recommendations, or to transitional supports for communities and Indigenous governments as they adapt to changes resulting from new forest management systems.

While BC Budget 2021 does include increased funding for land-use planning modernization, support for negotiations with Indigenous communities, and funds to enact the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the budget is missing critical funding pieces needed to fully implement the Old Growth Strategic Review recommendations.

Situated within the Territory of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, thirty years ago our region was also at a crossroads with respect to the ongoing harvest of timber resources. Since that time, the District of Tofino has continued to engage with the Province and other governments on issues of sustainability and equity, as noted in our most recent Strategic Plan, protocol agreements and other corporate strategies.

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Our intention in writing to you, Minister, is to not only show the District of Tofino's support for the expedient implementation of the Strategic Review's recommendations, but also to add our voice to the calls for dedicated funding to enact the recommendations in an economically just manner to build healthier ecosystems, better long-term land management and greater public support for this much needed paradigm shift.

Sincerely,

**Dan Law, Mayor
District of Tofino**

cc. MLA Josie Osborne
Local Governments of British Columbia