

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TIMBER SUPPLY

Comments on report (*Growing Fibre - Growing Value*)

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In review of the Committee report, *Growing Fibre – Growing Value*, the following key comments are provided for consideration by interested parties.

Overall perspectives

- There are no surprises regarding the issues identified through the consultation process as they are consistent with those heard during the 2011 HFHC Community Dialogue Sessions and those from forest management experts.
- The recommendations are:
 - Helpful in raising the profile of forest management
 - Not outlandish but do not push the envelope
 - Nothing new as they were generally known within Government or the bureaucracy for some time
 - Unfortunately focused on short-term economic actions and include only a minor amount of long-term sustainability needs
- Report is disappointing as the Committee chose to only comment on the issues specific to their narrow Terms of Reference while ignoring other key issues related to the overall management of BC's forests (e.g., need for an updated SFM framework, need for a comprehensive community diversification action plan, need for enhanced forest research, environmental protection and forest health, need for actions regarding reduction of the NSR lands). The Committee had the opportunity to use the initiative to bring leadership to the issue of BC forest management and be innovative in forwarding recommendations on priority provincial forest management issues to the Legislature. This is an opportunity lost!

Priority comments on recommendations

- Deficiencies in recommendations include:
 - No timeline regarding their implementation, although the Government has committed a plan by September. If all of the recommendations were to be implemented it will take 5-10 years due to such issues as budgets and process. This needs to be identified to avoid any misunderstanding by the public, especially the impacted communities.
 - Implementation of the recommendations will be costly. It is doubtful the costs can be covered within existing Ministry budgets as they have been decreased substantially over the last several years. The Committee should make it clear whether the expectation is for Government to provide the funding and resourcing, if the overall timber supply objective is to be achieved. Without additional resources, the tendency will be for Government to pay lip service to the recommendations and say they are advancing forest management and community adaptation.
 - It is disappointing the Committee did not reference the need for improvement in forest management and the Sustainable Forest Management framework in-which it is governed (e.g., BC forest vision and goals, supporting legislation and policy, requirements for spatially and temporally explicit strategic forest management plans, etc). Without a review of these issues BC's future forest will not meet the needs of the communities and the public.
 - It is a disappointment the Committee did not provide solid recommendations to assist communities in adapting to the post-beetle era. Recommending the Ministry give consideration to policy changes to meet their needs is grossly inadequate. Communities need money to implement the adaptation strategies developed through the Beetle Action Coalitions or the BC forest sector will struggle like the cod fishery in the Maritimes!
 - The simplicity of creating a value-added sector by dealing with log exports and bio-energy is a disappointment. A comprehensive strategic action plan that integrates forest management with community diversification opportunities and business issues is required, not just looking at log exports.
 - It is disappointing there is no reference to an independent assessment of the forest inventory to ensure new ideas are included and the status quo, which got us into this inventory situation, avoided.

- Positives in recommendations include:
 - The report is a good beginning but the devil is in the details.
 - It is encouraging the Committee recommended re-establishment of the Land Use Implementation Committees to review the status of the land use plans and make recommendations on the future.

- The recognition by the Committee of the importance of more involvement by communities in forest management decisions is encouraging.
- A measured approach recommended by the Committee that uses science to evaluate functionality of forest reserves is encouraging.

Concerns

A few major concerns arose from the report. These are:

- Fear Government will:
 - Say they have the blueprint along with the Roundtable on Forestry report to revitalize the forest sector. This would be totally incorrect as key issues have not been addressed. A comprehensive strategic action plan is being prepared by the *Healthy Forest – Healthy Communities* initiative that will provide recommendations on all the identified priority issues of communities and forest management experts.
 - Limit actions to those that are superficial and support political expediency so a message of acceptance can be given with little change. Hopefully this will not be the position they will take.
 - Consider the recommendations as the answer to the future of our forest and the communities as they state in the press release (i.e., framed its recommendations within the broad context of future forest management in British Columbia”). This grossly missed the point of what is needed for the future of BC forests.
- Burns Lake recommendations:
 - If Hampton needs a decision by August 31st, as stated in their submission to the Committee, the recommended actions will not provide the necessary data and analysis. The fear is Government will make a decision that Hampton will get the 1 million m³/year of AAC with superficial inventory information and without the analysis recommended by the Committee. This will satisfy a political need but do an injustice to Hampton and the Burns Lake communities.
 - The inventory itself will take a year or more to do properly.
 - Re-establishing the Land Use Implementation Committee will not be done until October at the earliest and if they need to look at the forest reserve opportunities in the field this will not occur once the snow comes. Therefore, it will be next year before the data is collected and analyzed for use in making the decision on how much AAC is available to Hampton.
 - The mill decision requirements and the recommendations are not in sync. Creating a non-sustainable AAC has the potential for problems in the future for the new mill.