

C-C BAC CHANGE IN STRATEGY

Bill Bourgeois Comments

The Beetle Action Coalitions were created by Government to provide assistance funding to mitigate the impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic in BC interior. Three were created, one in the north (Omineca BAC), one in central BC (Cariboo-Chilcotin BAC) and one in southern BC (Southern Interior BAC). The focus was on providing funding to develop strategies and fund projects intended to mitigate the economic impacts of the MPB. The concept was good but the amount of funding provided by Government was grossly insufficient.

It is great to see the CCBAC change their strategy to focus on:

- Targeting regional economic diversification initiatives,
- Coordinating regional economic development, and
- Advocating for new investments in the region.

Community economic diversification has to occur at the regional level and preferably utilizing the “cluster” concept.

The change in CCBAC strategy is consistent with the views expressed by the HFHC in responding to the community issues identified during the 2011-2013 dialogue. The implementation of the CCBAC strategies relative to diversification of the forest related industries will be a challenge, given the very strong dominance of the primary forest sector producing commodity products in the region and the apparent limited meaningful action by Government in promoting secondary wood manufacturing. The decline in timber supply will also be a major factor as all the wood will be required to keep the existing mills operating at the current levels.

The CCBAC Board has mentioned they need to encourage collaboration and support from investors. This is essential but it will be a challenge to get the forest companies to do this in a meaningful way when it might impact their core business, especially if Government does not adjust the policies to encourage real secondary wood manufacturing investment. I congratulate the CCBAC on the change in strategy and wish them well in its implementation.