

POLITICAL FOREST RELATED COMMITMENTS – 2017 ELECTION

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COMPARISON SUMMARY – Based on announcements as of April 24, 2017

The following are comparisons of the 2017 Forestry Election Platform related commitments by the major Political Parties.

- Markets
 - The **BC Liberals, BC NDP** and **BC Greens** have identified:
 - Market access as one of their priorities
 - A desire to increase the Secondary (value-added) Wood Manufacturing Sector which would add to the economic diversity of communities
- Long-term forest stewardship
 - The **BC Liberals** have made short-term commitments to long-term forest stewardship as reflected in initiatives introduced in the latter part of 2016 and early in 2017 prior to the election call plus a new commitment to addressing the bark beetle issue in the northern interior
 - The **BC NDP** has only one specific commitment to long-term forest stewardship and that is reflected in expanding investments in reforestation
 - The **BC Greens** have focused on changes to forest management infrastructure as part of generating sustainable long-term forest management but have not identified specific actions

The BC Conservatives have not announced any specific forestry related commitments as of April 24, 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

All three Parties refine their 2017 Forestry Election Platforms by:

- 1) Demonstrating a commitment to long-term stewardship of the BC forest asset and contributing to the resiliency of forest dependent communities, and
- 2) Reviewing and utilizing the *Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities (HFHC) Update Opinion Summary Report* to develop more specific actions.

PARTY COMMITMENTS

BC LIBERALS ¹	COMMITMENT
	<p>Long-term forest stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the <i>Forest Enhancement Society</i> with one-time \$235M contribution • Continue the <i>Forest for Tomorrow Program</i> with \$150M funding as a contribution to reforesting 300k ha over 5 years • Providing an additional \$4M to identify & eliminate forest stands impacted by the Spruce Beetle in the Omineca forest region • Continue the forest inventory investment of \$8.5M annually
	<p>Community diversification-Secondary wood manufacturing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a <i>Wood (value-added) Secretariat</i> to implement the <i>Value-added Sector Action Plan</i> • Extend the <i>Rural Dividend Fund</i> for 3 more years with a total commitment of \$150 M
	<p>Markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand up for B.C. on Canada-US softwood issue • Diversify markets for wood products in China and India • Increase the Forestry Innovation Investment market support budget by \$0.5 M for 2018/19 & 2019/20
BC NDP	COMMITMENT
	<p>Long-term forest stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in the future by expanding investments in reforestation across BC
	<p>Community diversification-Secondary wood manufacturing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize the use of innovative BC wood products in infrastructure projects • Provide incentives to BC builders who use engineered wood products & BC companies starting innovative wood manufacturing operations • Work with industry, local governments & First Nations to expand wood manufacturing capacity • Work with BC's forest industry to find fair & lasting solutions that keep more logs in BC for processing
	<p>Markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight for fair trade deals for BC softwood lumber • Offer incentives to BC builders that use engineered wood products & to BC companies starting innovative wood manufacturing operations • Ensure innovative BC wood products are used in infrastructure projects, like schools, hospitals & rental housing construction • Work with industry, local governments & First Nations to create new manufacturing jobs • Work with colleges & universities to train the designers, engineers and tradespeople

¹ Several BC Liberal commitments are associated with earlier 2016-2017 announcements regarding current programs & not specifically identified in the 2017 Election Platform document but their continuation appears to be part of their commitments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with BC's forest industry & research organizations to expand efforts to market BC's high quality wood products to the world • Support industry in evaluating & meeting building material safety tests for export markets & giving the global building industry confidence in these products
BC GREENS	COMMITMENT
	<p>Forest management infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact a modern, evidence based, multi-objective <i>BC Forest and Range Ecology Act</i> • Implement new guidelines for the use of qualified professionals that eliminate the potential for conflict of interest & work with professional bodies to ensure codes of conduct for their members are fully enforced • Establish a natural resource sector-wide compliance & enforcement unit responsible for the continuum of compliance & enforcement activities from inspections to prosecutions; an additional \$20M will be allocated to enhance monitoring, compliance & enforcement • Establish a Natural Resource Commissioner who will lead a Natural Resources Board responsible for establishing sustainable harvest & extraction levels & reporting on the state of BC's environment & natural assets, conducting cumulative impact assessments & overseeing the professional reliance model • Rebuild the scientific & technical capability of the BC Public Service • Invest in a more extensive forest research network to encourage innovation regarding non-traditional uses of wood & the use of wood fibre to develop new grades of material for a wide range of products & promote advanced wood technologies & building systems • Review and modernize forest tenures with a view to promoting innovation, value-added, independent regional operations & indigenous enterprises • Engage in meaningful consultation & engagement that respects indigenous resource rights & title
	<p>Long-term forest stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure resilient forests & sustainable forestry, maximizing the value from our forests & ensuring their sustainable long term management • Work with industrial sectors that will be impacted by climate change to develop integrated climate risk management & resilience plans to preserve long term economic & environmental sustainability & promote best practices • Develop a BC Old-Growth Forest Inventory that will determine reserves & protect BC's old-growth forests
	<p>Community diversification-Secondary wood manufacturing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote value-added enterprises in the forest industry • Place further restrictions on the export of raw logs, while recognizing raw log exports are a symptom of a struggling value-added forest industry & not the cause • Remove the PST from purchases of machinery & equipment for modernization, upgrading & new investment in sawmills & other value-added wood processing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Forest Opportunities Panel mandated to identify opportunities for promoting innovation, value-added production, independent regional operations & indigenous enterprises • Institute policies to ensure forest waste is used productively • Support small, rural resource-dependent communities, by building skills & capacity for a future forest industry & promoting investment in economic diversification in rural communities
	<p>Markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote BC forest products in international markets & support the identification of new markets

COMMENTS

The following comments relate to how the Political Party 2017 election platform commitments reflect the **Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities (HFHC) community dialogue recommendations which focused on delivering long-term forest stewardship and factors leading to community resiliency**. The HFHC recommendations were developed through dialogue with British Columbians, forest professionals and experts concerned about the future of BC forests.

General

The **BC Liberals** maintain there are 140 BC communities that depend on BC forests. The forest sector is and will continue to be a major contributor to the provincial economy and community economic development and resiliency. It is critical politicians and decision-makers ensure BC forest values are sustainably managed over the long-term and the manufacturing of forest products remain viable, diversified and sustainable.

Overall, the commitments of both the BC Liberals and the BC NDP are a major disappointment. They are too general, lack meaningful actions and overall do not reflect the recommendations from BC concerned citizens. The commitments of the **BC Liberals** and **BC NDP** are grossly deficient in dealing with the major issues such as forest sector infrastructure, forest management practices, community involvement in strategic decision-making regarding their local forests and adequate forest management compliance and enforcement. The **BC Greens** are more specific in the areas where they have identified a committed emphasis (e.g., regulatory infrastructure). Recommended actions and current short comings on each of these are presented in the *HFHC Update Opinion Summary Report*². Much of the work on required actions from responsible people concerned about BC forests is readily available to the Political Parties, if they are interested.

Essentially, the commitments of the **BC Liberals** and **BC NDP** reflect a status quo position which encourages both short-term economics decision-making and forest companies to be “forest harvesters” rather than “forest managers.” Yes, we need to make sure we have diversified markets for our forest products. However, without a commitment to long-term forest stewardship, we will not have the

² The Report can be accessed from the HFHC website using the link <http://bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Long-term-stewardship-summary-report.pdf>

products to sell. Politicians need to be reminded that trees take a number of years (80-120) to produce the desired products. A long-term forest management view and action plan is required, of which neither Party has or commits to provide.

The **BC Greens** have emphasized a commitment to making changes in the forest management infrastructure and “ensure resilient forests and sustainable forestry, maximizing the value from our forests and ensuring their sustainable long term management.” This is encouraging but the specific commitments to long-term forest stewardship are lacking other than a general statement in this regard. The intent of the forest management and getting full value from the fibre are consistent with the broad intent of the HFHC dialogue recommendations.

The BC forest is an asset requiring investment and nurturing, if its trillion dollar value is to be maintained. Would the politicians take similar action to what they are proposing when thinking about their personal assets? I doubt it. So why do they do so with the public’s asset to which they have been entrusted?

Specific

The **BC Liberals** have used their previous actions and commitments as the basis for their forestry 2017 Election Platform. As identified in the *HFHC Update Opinion Summary Report*, the actions taken by Government since 2013 “...reflect limited impact regarding movement toward long-term forest stewardship. There were no actions in themselves viewed as making a sound and significant contribution to long-term forest stewardship.” Consequently, while it may appear there are commitments included in the Platform, they are not viewed as significantly helping to move toward the vision and goals identified by the participants in the HFHC community dialogue.

The **BC Greens** are the only Party that has management of old-growth as a part of the election Platform. This is highlighted to reflect the importance of this issue as it might affect timber supply and/or conservation of ecological systems.

The **BC NDP** commitment to “investing in reforestation” is laudable, but there are no specifics. It could be interpreted that their view is, if we plant more trees we are ensuring the future of the BC asset. Planting trees is good and should be done but a large percentage of the BC forest reforestation is a legal requirement of forest companies holding tenure, which they are fulfilling. It is the areas where Government has the reforestation obligation (e.g., wildfire and insect epidemic area reforestation) that is of concern. Although the **BC Liberals** can be criticized for their “political spin” reflected in actions taken, more **BC NDP** and **BC Greens** specifics are required as well before the commitment to investment can be supported.

The fact that investing in reforestation by the **BC NDP** is the only commitment to long-term stewardship, suggests they either do not view other issues as a priority or significantly lack in knowledge about what is needed as outlined in the *HFHC Update Opinion Summary Report*. I hope the former is not the correct situation. The **BC Greens** are silent on specifics regarding forest management investment. Although, they

may argue that to meet the sustainable long term management would need to include investments but specifics are required before this can be confirmed.

The **BC Liberals** have committed, at some level, to community economic diversification through actions relative to increasing value-added manufacturing. However, there are no specifics and the actions initiated reflect more of the same band aid approach we have seen for decades, specifically, more consultation, more advisory groups and little real action. We need to utilize and build on what we know to move forward. The **BC NDP** and **BC Greens** have provided more specific actions related to their value-added commitments which suggest a seriousness in building the Sector. One of the relative specific actions by the **BC NDP** and **BC Greens** is the issue of log exports. While the **BC Liberals** are silent on the issue, the other two Parties reference it as a product of not addressing the need for increased value-added manufacturing. Neither the **BC NDP** nor **BC Greens** commitments include the banning log exports. It is encouraging that the Parties recognize the issue is more complex than this commonly used political statement.

Wood markets were not part of the HFHC community dialogue. Therefore, there are no HFHC recommendations upon which to assess the commitments of the three political parties. Having said this, it would appear there are more domestic market commitments by the **BC NDP** as a means of building the secondary wood manufacturing sector than the **BC Liberals**. However, we should remember the **BC Liberals** instituted a "Wood First Program" a few years ago relative to public buildings. Both political parties support getting a good trade deal with the United States through a new Canada-US Softwood Lumber Agreement. All three parties are committed to diversifying international markets.