



Ref: 186510

May 8, 2012

Misty MacDuffee, Chair
Gulf Islands Alliance
PO Box 795
Ganges, British Columbia
V8K 2W3

Dear Ms. MacDuffee:

Thank you for your letter and backgrounder of February 27, 2012, regarding your request for the entire Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) zone to be exempt from Section 21 of the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* (the Act).

I appreciate your interest and concern for the state and future of the Coastal Douglas-fir forests in British Columbia. I understand that you are concerned that this section limits a local government's ability to protect the remaining forested lands in the CDF zone.

Government established the Act to be part of a comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework which protects the environment and citizens by encouraging responsible forest stewardship on private land. The Act and its regulations are specifically designed to balance private property rights with protecting public values of soil conservation, water quality, fish habitat, reforestation and wildlife. The intent of the Act is to provide an enhanced level of sustainable forest management on private land.

The requirements under the Act support sustainable management outcomes and all private managed forest landowners are accountable to the Private Managed Forest Land (PMFL) Council for their forestry activities. In the CDF zone, participation in the program ensures that the land is maintained as forest.

Forestry is a long-term investment, and Section 21 exists to ensure that landowners have the freedom they need to manage their forest while it grows, and provides them with the certainty of being able to harvest when it is ready. Therefore, I am not in a position to support an exemption from this section due to its importance in encouraging and supporting private landowners to grow trees and manage their forests.

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There are other alternatives available to achieve conservation objectives where it is of concern to local government. Local governments may encourage, or offer incentives to, PMFL landowners to manage for desired ecological values. If a stronger degree of protection is desired, local governments or other interested parties can explore purchase options with the landowner.

Thank you for writing to share your views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Thomson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Steve Thomson
Minister