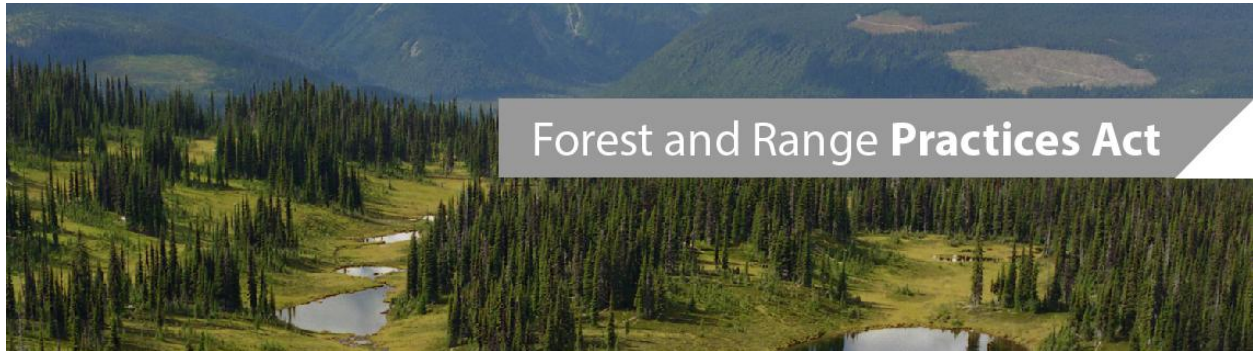


Here's the big one! We need people to submit feedback on the Forest and Range Practices Act ... If you only do one of these government surveys, do this one. Here are my answers and a link to the government site where you can complete the feedback form:



Here is a link to the government site where you can fill out the feedback form for changes to the Forest Range and Practices Act (FRPA):

<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/forestandrangepractices/>

Here are some answers to the questions on the feedback form that might help you to craft your own answers, or which you can copy and paste if you like:

(1) How should the Province identify opportunities and priorities for adapting forest management to a changing climate, such as mitigating the effects of beetle infestations, drought and fire?

A: There should be full consideration of all of the available scientific data before logging is given a green light. This means that there should be a number of qualified scientific professionals from a variety of related fields, working as teams for the government and not the logging companies, whose specific job it is to identify how to mitigate the effects of beetle infestations, drought and fire, and how to adapt to a changing climate. These professionals should be consulted on a per-landscape basis, which means that there should be different recommendations for different specific areas,

like watersheds. Questionable practices, like spraying Glyphosate to kill off deciduous trees, which are a known fire barrier, should be halted immediately.

(2) What factors should be considered in the planning of forest operations to reduce the risks of wildfire around your community?

A: The effects of forest on mitigating climate change and on creating rainfall overall should be considered with respect to logging anywhere in the province. Furthermore, the harvesting of timber should not be seen as a primary "go to" for mitigating wildfire risks in terms of creating "fire barriers". Teams of qualified scientists should be put to work to assess how best to mitigate fires around communities, and harvesting of timber in the province should stop (especially in and around communities) until these teams have had a chance to fully assess how and where timber harvesting might actually decrease wildfire risks. Furthermore, timber harvesting should not be considered the only approach. There should be government funding, for example, for clearing out underbrush and establishing safe and reliable roads to water sources for fighting fires. There should also be government incentive programs for supporting people in maintaining safe underbrush pruning and other fire-safe activities in and around their homes and communities. Communities should have a direct say in how and where wildfire mitigation practices occur in and around their areas. When there is risk of forest fires, and the forests are dry, all logging should be immediately halted. Failure for logging companies to comply with stopping logging when there is a heightened risk of forest fires should be punishable with significant criminal charges and financial liability. Logging companies should hold insurance so that, in the case of fire, locals are reimbursed for any damages that may result.

(3) A vital step in landscape-level planning is understanding what is important to the public. Based on what is important to

you or your community, what information on the condition of resource values such as species-at-risk habitat do you think is necessary to support the planning process?

Important considerations and information include water (including residential watersheds), wildlife habitat, biodiversity, tourism, recreation, slide risk, community input and indigenous rights. Until all of these are considered by a team of scientific experts from a variety of fields, logging should not be allowed. Furthermore, information about community opinion on logging in their areas, when it is not favourable toward logging, should be considered a veto against logging in that area, based on the majority of opinion in that community alone. The process should be similar to putting up a pub: people should be surveyed, at the expense of the logging company, and conducted by an independent government auditor, on their opinions as to whether logging should be okay in their area and surrounding areas.

(4) How would you like to be involved in the planning process?

I would like to first of all be made aware of it. Citizens should be able to sign up for an email list, where they would be made aware of plans for logging occurring anywhere near their place of residence, or any other place where they have a concern. Secondly, I would like my opinion to matter beyond a public meeting that the logging companies can feel free to ignore. I want there to be surveyed votes on logging in and around my community so that I have a direct say on whether these practices take place anywhere in my community or surrounding areas. In order to ensure that local communities have a say, District Forest Managers should have more power to control what gets cut and when, and should be answerable directly to the regional municipalities and districts.

(5) Resource roads are a valuable asset in the province as they provide access for the forest industry, ranchers, other resource

users, and the public for commercial and recreation purposes. Yet, these same road networks are costly to maintain and have potential negative impacts on wildlife, water quality and fish habitat. What values do you believe are important to consider when planning new roads, road use and maintenance, and deactivation in your area?

The effect on animal habitat should be considered, as well as the effects on watersheds, potentially unstable terrain and slide areas, biodiversity, animal and fish habitat, and indigenous rights. The question of roads, where they go and how many should be again studied by a team of scientists with specialities in a wide variety of related fields. These specialists should, again, not be working for the logging companies but for the government, so as to minimize the potential for conflict of interest that so dominates logging practices today. Also, again, communities should ultimately have the say about where, how and why roads get built in their areas and surrounding areas. Any roads that are built should, after logging, become government property, not to be resold to other logging companies. The use of these roads should be decided at the discretion of the communities in which they are present. Roads should not be allowed to be built until logging is approved in a given area, punishable by criminal charges. When roads create hazards like slides, the logging company should be held accountable for them. Logging companies should be required to take prepaid 100-year insurance on any roads in case they trigger slides or cause damage to the environment or animals, and the insurance funds should go directly to mitigating these effects should they occur.

(6) How can the Province improve transparency and timelines of information regarding proposed operational and landscape-level objectives, plans and results?

The province should create a system by which citizens can sign up for and receive notification of planned logging in any area of the province. This

would be a website that BC Citizens could visit and where we could enter our email, choose which areas we wanted notifications for, and then receive them by email. These alerts should include links to landscape-level planning documents, logging plans, maps of cutblocks and roads, scientific assessments for the area, hydrological assessments, slope stability assessments and details of the community consultation processes and their results, any past FRPA infringements by the logging company in the past, and any other relevant data concerning the proposed logging and logging company. This information should continue to be built upon during the logging process, and include the results of government oversight by registered experts who check on the logging sites to ensure compliance. The cost of this oversight, and of the creation of this system, should be paid for by the logging companies.

(7) What information will help inform your feedback on plans that may impact you, your community or your business (e.g., maps of cutblocks and roads planned in your area, hydrological assessments, wildlife habitat areas or recreation opportunities, etc)?

It is vital that communities and private citizens have access to landscape-level planning documents, logging plans (ie maps of cutblocks and roads), scientific assessments for the area (ie hydrological assessments, slope stability assessments) and details of the community consultation processes and their results, any past FRPA infringements by the logging company in the past, and any other relevant data concerning the proposed logging and logging company. This information should continue to be built upon during the logging process, and include the results of government oversight by registered experts who check on the logging sites to ensure compliance.

(8) What additional values should be considered in FRPA that will allow us to manage forest and range practices in a better way?

(a) Eliminate conflicts of interest. For example, Registered Professional Foresters who are drawing up logging plans should not work for logging companies. They should work for, and be directly accountable to government and the people.

(b) Local community control. Local municipalities and regional districts should have the final say on whether logging happens in their areas and surrounding areas. This should include any slope or face close to or visible from those communities. This control should be based on a surveyed vote similar to how local pubs are approved. Municipalities and districts should be able to create community logging plans that logging companies are obliged by law to follow. District managers should be directly answerable to the municipalities and regional districts and work closely with them in determining potential areas for logging and protection. Community plans should have direct bearing on and control over any further or more detailed logging plans drawn up by Registered Professional Foresters and District Managers, and municipalities should also have veto/editing power over how any further logging plans or details are fleshed out.

(c) Scientific procedures. Multidisciplinary teams of scientists should be employed by the government to best assess how to approach wildfire mitigation, climate change, slide risks, protection of watersheds, protection of animal habitat, tourism, recreation and all other pertinent factors bearing on the non-timber value of forests, and these should be given careful consideration and weighed against the value of logging. In cases where the value of the forests, safety of communities and protection of important resources like drinking water outweigh the value of logging, logging should not occur.

(d) Government oversight. The government should be directly responsible for ensuring that logging companies follow the FRPA, and that they do not violate community standards or wishes.

(e) Accountability: violations of the FRPA and/or of community logging plans should result in criminal charges and/or prohibitions from holding or applying for new timber licenses, which would include the person directly violating the FRPA (ie the logging company employee), the logging company, any associated holding companies, and the logging company owners, pending a review. The review should be significant and conducted by a group of experts appointed by the government, their findings should be binding (not arguable by appeal to the courts), and the prohibition on holding or applying for licenses should last at least a year on a first violation. One purpose of the review will be to establish whether the company will reoffend. If there is evidence of multiple violations, the prohibition on holding or applying for licenses should be permanent. Second violations result in a five year prohibition. Third violations should be result in permanent prohibitions. In cases where there are landslides in or around the area where a violation has occurred, whether that violation can be directly linked to the slide or not, the logging company, it's owners and the employee responsible for the violation should be held criminally responsible for any ensuing property damage, personal damages and/or loss of life. Logging companies should be required to hold insurance for damage of property (ie due to fires and slides), loss of life, personal damages as well as for payment to communities in cases where they violate the FRPA or the community's express plans for forests in their areas and surrounding areas.

(f) Profiteers bear the cost: Logging companies should bear the cost of government oversight, the creation of a transparency website (as described above) for residents and any other costs associated with making logging safer, more transparent and more controllable by communities.

(g) Alternatives. Alternatives to logging should be explored, including products that might replace wood and paper for building at less environmental cost. BC should actively build these industries to provide employment for citizens.

(9) In what ways should the province strengthen government oversight and industry accountability regarding forest and range activities to better address the challenges of climate change and the interests of all British Columbians?

The government should consider reducing the amount of logging in the province, possibly by creating more protected parks. This would be a step toward securing a future for our children. The forests are vital containers of carbon and also regulators of rainfall. When we cut them down, we change the weather and the environment. There is such a small window now for us to salvage a future. Please consider reducing logging as such a very small price, and a small step, toward a world where our children and grandchildren are not ravaged by drought, wildfire, starvation and poverty.