



December 13, 2002

Dear Forest and Range Management Practitioner:

When our administration was elected in May 2001, we brought with us a New Era commitment to establish a results based code with tough penalties for non-compliance. Over the last 18 months a tremendous amount of work has been done towards meeting this commitment, culminating in the passage in November of the Forest and Range Practices Act. This bill introduces a new forest management regime when it comes into force next spring. A regime that I believe meets our New Era commitments.

During the same session my government also passed the Forest Statutes Amendments Act. This bill, and its associated regulations, streamlines provisions in the existing Forest Practices Code. These changes come into effect immediately and are a transition to the provisions of the Forest and Range Practices Act. You are here today to learn about these changes.

We believed it was essential to change to a forest management model that was more results-based:

- to improve the competitiveness of the province's number one economic driver – forestry;
- to decrease the transactional and operational costs to both government and industry; and
- to reduce the complexity of the existing Forest Practices Code.

The new Forest and Range Practices Act was shaped by an inclusive consultation process, inside and outside of government. The public process included stakeholder sessions managed by Dr. George Hoberg of UBC, and open public forums led by a seven-member MLA Panel chaired by North Island MLA Rod Visser, around the province. Submissions and presentations were received from environmental groups, community interests, First Nations and small and large licensees.

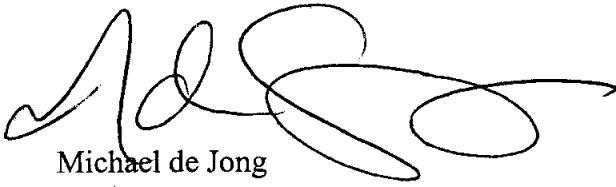
In developing the new forest and range practices framework, we listened – and will continue to listen – to the wide range of views so we can be sure the code will maintain B.C.'s high environmental standards and reduce complex paperwork for large and small companies alike.

Page 1 of 2

I want to assure you that government carefully considered and debated many alternatives. I believe that the end result strikes a balance we can all be proud of, and reflects good public policy. Government faced some difficult decisions and deliberated them carefully before giving direction to policy staff. An example, would be the decision of government to allow a due diligence defence for administrative remedies.

British Columbia has a high reputation for environmental excellence, because of the work resource managers have delivered on the ground. Again, I appreciate your past accomplishments and thank you in advance for your commitment to implementing results-based forest and range practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael de Jong', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael de Jong
Minister