

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

July 18, 2008

The Editor  
National Post

I'm writing in response to your July 18<sup>th</sup> article on Campbell's Cabinet. I thought your readers might find it helpful to understand some of the rationale behind the decision to allow Western Forest Products to remove its private land from three tree farm licences (TFLs).

First of all, the lands in question are private land and this government believes that private property rights need to be respected. The private land in questions was put into tree farm licences in the 1950s; however, ever since then, provisions have existed that allow private land to be removed from tree farm licences.

Private lands generally have been removed from TFLs based on the merits of each request. The authority to remove private land from a tree farm licence currently rests with the Minister of Forests and Range under the Forest Act. Forest management issues, such as old growth management areas, wildlife habitat, recreation, road access, water users as well as potential benefits to the province and the company are all considered when the minister is making the decision.

In the case of Western Forest Products, the company submitted a 23-page package complete with technical information, detailed maps and the results of consultations with local water users. That package, a consultation summary with 23 First Nations, and a detailed briefing note, was submitted to the Minister of the day for his consideration.

The vast majority of private land removed from TFLs has stayed as managed forest; however, a company is obligated to work with the appropriate level of government on any future development plans or projects for its private land.

Sincerely,  
Pat Bell  
Minister of Forests and Range