

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dec. 10, 2008

The Editor
National Post

RE: Premiers to blame for forestry woes

I'm writing to set the record straight after reading the misconceptions contained in your Dec 10th article, Premiers to blame for forestry woes.

First, the forest policy changes that British Columbia has made over the last few years have created a climate conducive to investment. And those changes have been successful as evidenced by the fact that despite the worst downturn in 30 years to hit the forest sector, B.C. has been able to increase its share in the U.S. marketplace, compared to other provinces. In 2000, 45.8 per cent of lumber from Canada going to the U.S. was from B.C.; today, it's 58 per cent.

Second, as co-chair of the Forestry Roundtable, I've heard many suggestions of how we can improve forest policy. But I've not heard any serious calls to sell off our Crown forest lands. That's just not on. We need to work together, communities, workers, industry and First Nations, to maximize the economic benefits from our public forests.

Sincerely yours,

Pat Bell
B.C. Minister of Forests and Range