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March 12, 2008

All Coastal Licensees
Coast Forest Products Association
Coast Region FRPA Implementation Team

Dear Sir/Madam:

As many of you know, the coast forest industry has been facing many challenges in recent years as a result high operating costs, low selling prices and overall reduced demand for wood products. Forest practices, particularly in the northern portions of the region have been modified in an attempt to deal with the economic challenges. These practices have been brought to the attention of senior managers in the ministry including the deputy minister and myself. In particular, the practice of removing higher valued tree species such as cedar using high retention silvicultural systems has been discussed relative to long term sustainability. The recently released Forest Practices Board audit speaks to this particular issue.



The issues can be viewed at both the landscape level, the sustainability of the overall cedar harvest; and the stand level, the management of the areas where high valued tree species are being removed. The former is an issue which I can address through the Timber Supply Review process and is not the focus of this letter.

The stand level issues include a range of topics including: the appropriate use of silvicultural systems, forest productivity in high retention blocks, stocking standards, and forest health risk factors. Hal Reveley, co-chair of the Coast Forest Region FRPA Implementation Team (CRIT), has briefed me on several occasions regarding the strategies being employed to resolve these. I am pleased and very supportive of the approaches being taken. I also note that the efforts of CRIT are mentioned in the Forest Practices Board audit which reinforces in my mind that their strategy is the best approach at present.

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Ministry of Forests
and Range

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All Coastal Licensees

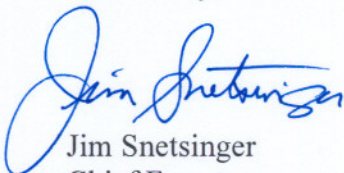
The CRIT Silviculture Working Group, which includes both industry and ministry members, co-authored a discussion paper on use of high retention silvicultural systems. This was widely distributed as a professional document to assist field foresters with some of the difficult challenges they face on the Coast. This document was then used as a basis for field monitoring that took place in 2006 and 2007 and which is continuing in 2007 and 2008. When the CRIT Silviculture Working Group carries out a field review, the licensee forester usually attends which provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue. Each licensee, professional, and district manager received copies of the findings and the attached regional summary report was prepared.

One of the recommendations resulting from their field monitoring was that there needed to be more training. In October, a workshop on silvicultural systems was offered to practicing professionals and was well attended. A summary report from that event is attached.

I understand that meaningful changes are occurring in the field. In fact, some professionals have asked for additional monitoring on their cutblocks as well as assistance with developing prescriptions. These professionals are clearly showing a willingness to learn from their colleagues as they work towards the professional standards expected of them and is a testament to how professional reliance and accountability can and should work. I encourage you to continue to support the efforts of CRIT and consider the recommendations of your professionals as they work to carry out sustainable and professionally sound stand level forest practices.

I believe this approach is working and I look forward to further progress reports on this important resource management issue.

Yours truly,



Jim Snetsinger
Chief Forester

Attachments: Silvicultural System and Partial Cut Harvesting Issues in the Coast Forest Region. 2006/2007 Monitoring Results
Tofino Summary

pc: Jim Gowriluk, Regional Executive Director, Coast Forest Region
Ted Nash, Regional Staff Manager, Coast Forest Region
All District Managers, Coast Forest Region