

Groups

PETITION Calling for an Independent Public Inquiry on Forestry

To the LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY of the PROVINCE of BRITISH COLUMBIA in LEGISLATURE ASSEMBLED the PETITION of British Columbia voters and other concerned citizens humbly sheweth;

Whereas overwhelming public testimony provided in the recent province-wide hearings on tree farm licenses clearly demands that either an independent full Royal Commission or a Public Inquiry under the Inquiries Act must be conducted on the *general* subject of forest management in British Columbia;

Whereas the annual allowable cut (AAC) on the public's crown land is much greater than the amount which can be sustained in B.C. and there is no regulation of the amount cut on private lands;

Whereas over 20,000 direct jobs have been lost in the forest industry from documented poor utilization, excessive waste, increasing automation and increasing exports of unprocessed logs. As a result of the mismanagement of public forests, many communities are facing economic and environmental crises from the rapidly approaching falldown effect;

Whereas the lack of effective watershed protection and the failure of the government to respond to a growing public demand to preserve 13% of the province as wilderness has caused increased confrontation and civil disobedience across the province;

Whereas the new Forest Resources Commission is strongly biased in favor of industry and has not been given the necessary full powers of inquiry including subpoena and full protection of witnesses; and

Whereas it is essential that the investigation is conducted independent of the Forests Act and the Ministry of Forests. Because the process must be seen to be impartial by all parties involved, it is also essential that the composition of a Royal Commission or Public Inquiry be led by a small impartial team of judges, be given full subpoena powers, and include environmental, native Indian, union, tourism industry, fisheries industry, and general public concerns in balance with logging industry interests; and

Therefore the undersigned representatives of environmental, labor, community and native non-government organizations request that the B.C. provincial government immediately establish a Royal Commission or Commission of Inquiry to undertake the following tasks:

1. Conduct a full investigation of the forest inventory, forest tenures, and the sustainability of the current annual allowable cut for all crown and privately owned forested land in B.C.;
2. Investigate means to protect all forest uses, including domestic watersheds, fish and wildlife, tourism, hunting and trapping, wilderness, old growth forests, and native concerns;
3. Conduct a thorough examination of current silvicultural practices, wood utilization and export practices and recommend appropriate improvements needed to achieve sustainable, wholistic forestry;
4. Investigate ways to protect future jobs for loggers and mill workers;
5. Recommend means available to B.C.'s forest industry to minimize detrimental effects of global warming; and
6. Recommend means to effectively deal with conflict resolution and fully incorporate local decision making input in resource management.

Furthermore, we the undersigned request a meeting as soon as possible with Premier Bill VanderZalm to work out an acceptable solution to the above.

We humbly pray that your HONOURABLE HOUSE may be pleased to pass the necessary legislation to implement the above requests; and in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Please return this Petition to the Valhalla Society, Box 224, New Denver, B.C. V0G 1S0

Name	Organization	Address	# Members
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St. Andrew's Cathedral Parish

740 View St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 1J8

phone (604) 388-5571

March 20, 1989

Honourable William Vander Zalm,
Premier,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B.C., V8V-1X4

MAR 30 1989

Dear Mr. Vander Zalm:

The Parish Pastoral Council of St. Andrew's Cathedral supports the following resolution:

WHEREAS a great number of forestry practices currently being used in British Columbia are environmentally unsound;

AND WHEREAS the Forest Act of B.C. requires that the Forest Ministry manage the lands under its control for wilderness, wildlife and recreation values as well as for industrial uses, and that this responsibility is not being adequately fulfilled;

AND WHEREAS, despite calls for the halting of raw log exports from a wide cross-section of British Columbians, and despite the fact that this practice is not in the long-term best interests of the province and its residents, yet this practice continues;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we support the convening of an inquiry into the management of the B.C. forest resource under the Inquiry Act of B.C. (An Act to Amend Statutes Chapter 198 Part II);

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the proposed Forest Licence conversions to Tree Farm Licences program be halted until the conclusions of this inquiry are made public.

Yours sincerely,

Donald L'Heureux,
Chairperson,
Social Justice Committee,
St. Andrew's Cathedral

cc -Honourable Dave Parker
Minister of Forest and Lands

-Western Canada Wilderness Committee,
Vancouver, B.C.