

NEWS RELEASE

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TLF HEARINGS INVALID WITHOUT MAP

Forest Minister Dave Parker is keeping secret the crucial map showing the areas of B.C. that are being sought by companies for new tree farm licence tenures. He also continues to state that his proposal to create more of these tenures is just opposed by a vocal minority, despite the overwhelming public rejection evidenced so far at the TFL hearings he is chairing.

These two facts are making the current hearings into TFL expansion become just another phoney Forest Service public involvement process, according to Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

"How can he think he is giving the idea of having more corporate control over the public's forests a fair hearing when he doesn't even show the public what lands are under threat of TFL alienation?" asks Wilderness Committee director Joe Foy.

Parker told Foy on March 8, during the morning question period at the Vancouver public hearing, that the map would be available in one year and would not commit to it being available earlier.

The Forest Service contends that the reason the map is being kept secret is that it may give a "false impression". According to Foy the map would give a "true impression" and reveal just how much of B.C. would be taken over by the major companies if this resource give-away goes ahead.

Noting that the deadline for written submissions regarding the TFL program is March 17, the Wilderness Committee believes that this is not long enough. Public submissions should be kept open until after the public has had an opportunity to see the map in order to understand the extent of these applications and the impact they will have on the province.

"It is becoming completely obvious that the Forest Minister Parker is attempting to ram the idea of more TFLs through despite massive opposition and without allowing the public access to the information necessary to properly evaluate them," concluded Foy.

The Wilderness Committee continues to demand a full public inquiry into the mismanagement and forestry malpractice it believes is rampant in the province.