



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
(Committee of the Whole)
Agenda**

Thursday, January 13, 2022

PAGE NO.

ACTION

Agenda – January 13, 2022

Approve

Supplementary Agenda

Receive

MINUTES

2-6

**Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes
- November 4, 2021**

Approve

DELEGATION

**MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE
OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Eamon O'Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister
RE: Old Growth**

REPORTS

7-31

**Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison
- Input Request on the Design of Skeena
Region Roundtable**

**Discussion/
Receive**

CORRESPONDENCE

32-33

**Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.
– Harmonizing Stumpage Policy for Community
Forests**

Receive

34

**Canfor Calls on BC Government to Rethink Old
Growth Deferral Process – Together we can Protect
Our Forests and Workers and Communities**

Receive

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
(VIRTUAL)

Thursday, November 4, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Shane Brien

Directors Gladys Atrill
Mark Fisher
Dolores Funk
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire
Annette Morgan
Bob Motion
Chris Newell – arrived at 10:02 a.m.
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson
Sarra Storey
Gerry Thiessen

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Jones Middleton, Director of Protective Services
Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Others Kiel Giddens, Public Affairs Manager, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project., left at 10:36 a.m.
Barrett Kennedy, Socio-economics Advisor, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project., left at 10:36 a.m.
Donald McLeod, Senior Land Manager, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project., left at 10:36 a.m.
Ian McLeod, Socio-economics, Senior Advisor, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project – arrived at 10:13 a.m., left at 10:36 a.m.
Tanner Moulton, Public Affairs Advisor, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project., left at 10:36 a.m.
Tamara Trevelyan, Public Advisor, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project., left at 10:36 a.m.
Sian Weaver, Manager Socio-economics, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project – arrived at 10:04 a.m., left at 10:36 a.m.

Media Eddie Huband, LD News

CALL TO ORDER Chair Brien called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Lambert

NRC.2021-5-1 “That the Natural Resources Committee Agenda for November 4, 2021 be adopted; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Director Lambert

NRC.2021-5-2 “That the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting.”
(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Natural Resources
Committee Meeting Minutes
– October 7, 2021 Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Funk

NRC.2021-5-3 “That the Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes of October 7,
2021 be approved.”
(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

TC ENERGY - COASTAL GASLINK PROJECT – Kiel Giddens, Public Affairs Manager, Sian Weaver, Manager of Socio-economics, Ian McLeod, Socio-economics, Senior Advisor, Tanner Moulton, Public Affairs Advisor RE: Socio-economic Effects Management Plan (SEEMP)

Chair Brienens welcomed Tanner Moulton, Public Affairs Advisor and Kiel Giddens, Public Affairs Manager, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project. Mr. Moulton introduced Sian Weaver, Manager of Socio-economics, Ian McLeod, Socio-economics, Senior Advisor, TC Energy – Coastal GasLink Project.

Messrs. Moulton and McLeod and Ms. Weaver Provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

TC Energy Coastal GasLink Project

- Legacy Moment – Coastal GasLink “Legacy of Giving” Campaign
- Socio-economic Effects Management Plan (SEEMP)
- SEEMP Report #6 Engagement
- SEEMP Feedback during phase 6 Engagement
- Wildfire Emergency Response Planning
 - o Planning
 - o Prevention
 - o Provision
- Housing
- Road Quality
 - o Sturgeon Point
 - o North Chilco FSR
 - o Blue Mountain
 - o 700 Road
 - o Maxan Road
 - o Morice FSR
- Waste Management
- SEEMP Economics Effects
- SEEMP Social Effects
- What Does Success Look Like?
- Keeping in Touch.

DELEGATION**TC ENERGY - COASTAL GASLINK PROJECT – Kiel Giddens, Public Affairs Manager, Sian Weaver, Manager of Socio-economics, Ian McLeod, Socio-economics, Senior Advisor, Tanner Moulton, Public Affairs Advisor RE: Socio-economic Effects Management Plan (SEEMP) (Cont'd)**

Discussion took place regarding:

- Road access and use
 - o CGL consultation with stakeholders and road users when a road needs to be utilized for construction purpose and access may be impacted
 - o Permissions and permitting process for CGL to utilize roads belonging to other agencies, companies, and stakeholders
 - o Public notification to road users
- Pursuing mutually beneficial connectivity infrastructure in the Buckflats area and CGL Phase 2 Pumping Station area
 - o Mr. Moulton will follow up.

Chair Brienen thanked Messrs. Moulton and McLeod and Ms. Weaver for attending the meeting.

REPORTS

Forest Policy Engagement
-Phase Two

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director McGuire

NRC.2021-5-4

“That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services’ Forest Policy Engagement – Phase Two memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- o Impact of mill closures
 - Trading/reallocating fibre to other mills
 - Potentially requesting claw backs to Community Forests
 - Significant tax loss to communities
 - Loss of employment
 - Significant loss to a community vs. very minimal loss to a sawmill company
 - Stumpage rate to the Province remains the same
 - Potentially a percentage of the stumpage rate should return to the community
- o Agriculture leases
 - Impact to Community Forests
- o Community Forests
 - Community benefit from natural resource extraction
 - Concerns regarding harmonizing area-based tenure pricing and moving from tabular rates to stumpage rates
- o Importance and encouragement of value manufacturing
- o Need to be proactive rather than reactive
- o Being inventive to find a solution as a collective group, working with industry, First Nations and key stakeholders.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Ministry of Forests, Lands,
Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development
-Modernizing Forest Policy in
British Columbia

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Lambert

NRC.2021-5-5

“That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services’ Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORRESPONDENCE

Linda Robertson, Director,
Strategic Initiatives, Skeena
Region, Ministry of Forests,
Lands, Natural Resource
Operations & Rural Development
– Regional Roundtable

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Storey

NRC-2021-5-6

“That the Committee receive the Correspondence from Linda Robertson, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Skeena Region, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development – Regional Roundtable.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ministry of Forests, Lands,
Natural Resource Operations
& Rural Development
– Revamped Forest Policy Puts
Environment, People First

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director McGuire

NRC-2021-5-7

“That the Committee receive the Correspondence from Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development – Revamped Forest Policy Puts Environment, People First.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**CORRESPONDENCE**

Ministry of Forests, Lands,
Natural Resource Operations
& Rural Development
– Government Taking Action
on Old-Growth Deferrals

Moved by Director Funk
Seconded by Director Lambert

NRC-2021-5-8

“That the Committee receive the Correspondence from Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (FLNRORD)– Government Taking Action on Old-Growth Deferrals.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORRESPONDENCE (CONT'D)

The following was discussed:

- Potential impact in percentage of area and cubic metres in the Nadina and Stuart Nechako Forest Districts
- Uncertainty concerning inclusion of the Morice area
- Uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding FLNRORD – Government Taking Action on Old-Growth Deferrals
- Director Thiessen’s discussion with Al Gorley, Triangle Resources, Professional Forester, and former Chair of the Forest Practices Board
- Utilizing forestry experts and consultants in partnership with other forest dependent communities
 - Regional District partnering with member municipalities
- Outreach to local First Nations
 - Working together collaboratively
- Potential impacts and challenges to communities
- Request FLNRORD representative(s) to present at a future RDBN meeting
- Village of Burns Lake meeting scheduled with First Nations communities and key stakeholders – November 9th
 - Director Funk will provide the invitation to Directors Lambert and Riis-Christianson
- Lakes TSA Coalition – meeting being scheduled
- Chair Brienens will work with staff to have information for a future Natural Resources Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Storey

NRC.2021-5-9

“That the meeting be adjourned at 11:03 a.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Shane Brienens, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Brien and Natural Resources Committee

FROM: Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison

DATE: January 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Input Request on the Design of Skeena Region Roundtable

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

To receive, discuss and provide input on the six proposed questions.

BACKGROUND

In early 2021, the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (FLNRORD) and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) had reached out to local government representatives and stakeholders in the Skeena region to gain an understanding of regional concerns regarding Indigenous reconciliation and natural resource management initiatives. Their assessment confirmed that local government representatives and stakeholders would like a “one window stop” for information on reconciliation and related lands and resource initiatives. As such, Two Worlds Consulting Ltd. (TWC) have been contracted to work with a regional Inter-Ministry Team to:

- Develop a collaborative communication process with participants that can be a model for future and ongoing dialogue with local government and stakeholders; and
- Facilitate an initial virtual Roundtable meeting in March 2022 consisting of local governments and a cross-section of representatives from organizations in the Skeena Region including forest tenure holders, backcountry associations, and environmental and other organizations to discuss a proposed process and identify steps moving forward.

In preparation for the initial March 2022 Roundtable Meeting, the Inter-Ministry Team is seeking input regarding the proposed Roundtable process before January 21, 2022, on the following questions:

- What are the main objectives for the overall Roundtable process that are important to your organization?

- What should be the focus of the initial meeting to ensure a successful process going forward?
- How often should the Roundtable meet and for how long?
- What are some key topics your organization would like to discuss at the initial meeting?
- What is your organization's preference for receiving material related to the meeting (e.g., by email, shared document site)?
- Any other information or comments you would like to provide?

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations & Rural Development Email – Design of Skeena Region Roundtable



Stakeholder Engagement Needs Assessment for Indigenous Reconciliation Initiatives – Skeena Region

Submitted to Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource
Development

March 2021

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Executive Summary

This report is submitted to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) by Harris Palmer Ltd. (Harris Palmer).

The purpose of the report is threefold:

- 1) To identify a list of local governments and stakeholders in the Skeena region, specifically along the Highway 16 corridor between Burns Lake and Prince Rupert.
- 2) To ascertain the level of knowledge about Indigenous reconciliation initiatives among local governments and stakeholders, and assess engagement needs.
- 3) To outline options for engagement with local governments and stakeholders on Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the Skeena region.

Local Government & Stakeholder List:

Forty-one (41) local governments and stakeholders have been identified along the Highway 16 corridor between Burns Lake and Prince Rupert as having a potential interest in Indigenous reconciliation initiatives being undertaken by the Province in the region. This includes fourteen local governments, six forest tenure holders, five Chambers of Commerce, three environmental organizations, and nine backcountry/other associations (attached as Appendix A).

During February 2021, Harris Palmer interviewed thirty-seven of the forty-one groups identified in a series of ten small-group remote interview sessions. Participants were asked to share their knowledge of Indigenous reconciliation initiatives, talk about whether and how they had been engaged by the Province on those initiatives, and how they would like to be engaged going forward.

Findings:

There were a number of consistent themes that emerged during discussions with local governments and stakeholders. These can be summarized as follows:

- Local governments and stakeholders do not feel engaged or knowledgeable about Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the region. While they overwhelmingly support the concept of reconciliation, they feel as though the lack of information and engagement about reconciliation initiatives is creating divides within communities, leading to rumours, misinformation, and stoking racist sentiment.
- Local governments and stakeholders are not confident that their interests are being represented in the reconciliation discussions between the Province and Indigenous Nations, and they have serious concerns about how reconciliation agreements will be implemented.
- Many groups feel that provincial reconciliation negotiations have slowed down – and in some cases halted – local relationship-building because Indigenous Nations are overly focused on their relationship with the Province at the expense of local issues.
- There is limited understanding on what is included in Indigenous reconciliation initiatives, and how they might differ from treaty negotiations.
- There is a lack of clarity on whether reconciliation agreements will represent any sort of final agreement with Indigenous Nations or are simply a rolling set of commitments with no particular ‘end game’ in sight.
- There is an overwhelming sense that true reconciliation cannot be achieved unless everyone is included and ‘brought along’ in the process, and agreement that this is not currently happening.
- Previous processes such as the Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) and some of the mid-coast land use planning processes were cited by a few participants as examples of effective multi-party engagement processes that allowed for information-sharing and broad discussion of regional interests. A few participants also mentioned recent engagement on Wet’suwet’en discussions as one example of more meaningful engagement.

Engagement Options:

Based on the interviews conducted for this report, some sort of engagement and information-sharing process will need to be established in order to mitigate any further erosion of local community support around Indigenous reconciliation initiatives. Two options are proposed:

- Option One would see the establishment of 2-3 stakeholder-led 'Community Advisory Boards' (CAB) in the Skeena region. The CAB's would be organized geographically (e.g. along similar boundaries of the three Regional Districts, or Indigenous territorial groupings), and would be multi-party forums self-managed by members and funded by the Province. The purpose of the CAB's would be primarily to provide a forum for two-way information-sharing between the Province and local governments/stakeholders. A CAB process would minimize misinformation, facilitate a smoother implementation of reconciliation agreements, and ultimately increase support for agreements.
- Option Two would establish 2-3 Roundtables that would be driven and managed by the Province. The Roundtables would be similar in scope to the CAB's, but the Province would set the agenda, establish the process, and manage the meetings.

Both Options would provide local governments and stakeholders with a 'one-window stop' for information into Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the region. This would help address any resourcing issues and enable the groups to discuss common issues among a range of tables.

The Province may also want to consider resourcing the establishment of 'tenure-specific' side tables that would allow for some high-level technical discussions around the transfer of tenure in the region. Tenure transfers create a high level of anxiety among stakeholders and local governments primarily because there is limited insight into how the transfer of tenures will be implemented without significantly disrupting existing economic, community and social interests. Establishing side-tables to work through some of the implementation issues and concerns would be helpful.

Finally, the Province may want to consider resourcing Regional Districts to acquire some level of expertise around Indigenous relations that would allow them to fully participate in reconciliation discussions.

1. Introduction:

This report summarizes a series of meetings that were held with local governments and stakeholders along the Highway 16 corridor between Burns Lake and Prince Rupert in February 2021 regarding Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the region.

The purpose of the meetings was to assist the Province in understanding how local governments and stakeholders prefer to be engaged on Indigenous reconciliation initiatives, and to gather information about the level of knowledge and understanding of those initiatives and where gaps in information may exist.

In total, thirty-seven (37) local governments and stakeholders were interviewed. These included municipalities and regional districts, forest tenure holders, mining tenure holders, environmental organizations, backcountry associations/other (guide outfitters, cattleman associations, wildlife organizations), and local Chambers of Commerce (Appendix A provides a full list of organizations interviewed).

Methodology:

In advance of interviews with local governments and stakeholders, letters from FLNRORD were sent to each organization introducing the project and providing notice that they would be contacted for an interview. Following the introductory letter, Harris Palmer contacted each group and scheduled remote interview sessions.

Interviews were conducted in ten small group sessions:

- Fourteen (14) Local governments and regional districts were interviewed in one of four sessions;
- Six (6) forest tenure holders were interviewed in two session;
- Five (5) Chambers of Commerce were interviewed in one session; and
- Twelve (12) environmental organizations, guide outfitters, and others were interviewed in one of three sessions.

Each session lasted between 1.5-2.5 hours. Participants were asked a series of questions in three key areas:

- **Level of Awareness:** participants were asked about their level of awareness of Indigenous reconciliation initiatives (both existing and in-negotiation) in the region (those involving the Province of BC) and about their understanding of existing local and stakeholder engagement processes regarding those initiatives.
- **Areas of Interest/Concern:** participants were asked to share any concerns regarding Indigenous reconciliation initiatives, to talk about any gaps in their knowledge that may exist, and to discuss what may have worked in previous engagement processes.
- **Way Forward:** participants were asked to talk about how they prefer to be engaged by the Province on Indigenous reconciliation initiatives going forward.

Overall, the interviews were conducted to elicit both factual information (e.g. are you aware of Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in your region? Have you been engaged on those initiatives?) as well as contextual, qualitative information about how they have been engaged to date, and about their ‘feelings’ around Indigenous reconciliation agreements in general (e.g. what are some of your concerns about how you have been engaged to date? What has worked in previous engagement sessions? What are some of your concerns with reconciliation agreements?).

A list of questions for the interviews is included as Appendix B. It should be noted, however, that these questions were used as a guide only, and that the sessions were designed to encourage a dialogue between participants, and so questions were not necessarily asked and answered in any specific order or in any strictly enforced way. It should also be noted that for the most part, the substance of specific reconciliation initiatives was not discussed during the interviews. This was done deliberately to ensure that discussions remained focused on process, rather than content.

A Note on Terminology:

Throughout this report, the terms “Indigenous reconciliation initiatives”, “reconciliation initiatives”, and “reconciliation agreements” are used interchangeably to refer to the range of agreements that the Province has been negotiating with Indigenous Nations throughout the Skeena region. These initiatives

typically either encompass a broad range of issues and/or include a significant land, economic, or governance component. The terms “Indigenous Nation” and “Indigenous community” are also used interchangeably to refer to both elected and hereditary Indigenous governments that the Province is negotiating reconciliation agreements with in the region.

2. Overall Observations:

The groups interviewed for this report represented a wide range of interests – local governments, environmental groups, business representatives, tenure holders, and recreational users. Despite this diversity of interests, there were several common themes that emerged in all of the discussions. These can be summarized in the following seven points:

1. **There is general support for Indigenous reconciliation, but the lack of information and process is creating confusion, frustration, and potential opposition:**

As an overall observation, all of the groups that participated in interviews expressed general support for reconciliation initiatives with Indigenous communities. However, there was much less support – if any – for how engagement has been carried out to date, and very little knowledge of, or confidence in, the content of any resulting agreements.

“The lack of information and over-speculation is radicalizing people in the communities.”

Because of lack of information and participation in any process related to reconciliation initiatives, local governments and stakeholders said that they are more focused on how to minimize perceived potential negative impacts rather than positive outcomes. No one interviewed expressed a particularly positive interpretation of the reconciliation initiatives – no one is anticipating or planning around how to use the agreements to create certainty, improve racial harmony, attract investment or improve the quality of life of people in the area, for example. Instead, the narrative has become negative as there is an overall sense of government doing something ‘to us’ rather than ‘with us’.

“The process itself is stoking racial discontent in the community, not easing it.”

Many participants expressed a feeling of helplessness and the sense that they were on the outside looking in, being left to ‘pick up the pieces’ once agreements are concluded. They feel marginalized, and that they have been disempowered in order to empower another group. No one felt that real reconciliation could be achieved this way.

“We are disempowered and becoming the new ‘Indigenous’.”

2. **There is confusion about what reconciliation agreements are, and what they include :**

There is significant confusion about several foundational issues related to Indigenous reconciliation initiatives. Specifically:

- There is little to no understanding of how reconciliation agreements differ from treaties, or how the negotiations differ.
- There is little to no knowledge of what is being discussed at the reconciliation tables – is it land? Resources? Other?
- There is no clear understanding of how Indigenous groups are represented, and there is confusion about hereditary versus elected groups.
- There is no clear understanding of how the Province organizes itself in the reconciliation negotiations, and what Ministry is responsible for what topic area.

3. **There is confusion about what the Province is trying to achieve :**

Many participants said that they have felt ‘victimized’ by the lack of process and information-sharing around reconciliation agreements, and that they were confused about what the Province was ultimately trying to achieve through these initiatives. Some said that the Province needed to take more time to envision solutions first and then commence negotiations with an ‘end-game’ in mind.

“If the objective of reconciliation is to create certainty, this is doing the exact opposite as there doesn’t seem to be an end-game.”

4. The Province is trying to negotiate agreements too quickly:

There was general agreement that the speed by which BC was trying to conclude reconciliation agreements was too fast, and did not appropriately reflect the complexity of issues being negotiated. There is a perception that the Province’s agenda is tied to time over quality – that the Province’s priorities are focused on concluding agreements quickly rather than taking the time necessary to make sure they are foundationally strong.

“It takes longer to get a cutting permit than the government is giving themselves to finalize these agreements, and a cutting permit process is well defined and a lot less complicated.”

5. When there has been engagement, it has generally been inadequate:

A number of groups interviewed said that the most common way they hear about a reconciliation agreement between the Province and an Indigenous community is when they are invited to a signing ceremony – it is at this point they find out what is in the agreement. This puts them in what they feel is an impossible position because they are forced to accept an outcome without any input, while also being responsible – at least in part – for the smooth implementation of the agreement.

When there has been engagement in the process of reconciliation agreements, participants said that involvement has, for the most part, not been meaningful, and has instead been limited only to listening (“being told how it is”).

Some examples of previous engagement processes that were viewed favourably by participants include engagement related to the negotiation of the Nisga’a Treaty, the former Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) processes, and mid-coast land use planning processes. Some participants also referred favourably to recent engagement related to the Wet’suw et’en discussions as an example of a more meaningful process.

6. Information about reconciliation initiatives does not come from the Province :

Many groups indicated that their level of awareness of Indigenous reconciliation initiatives has not come directly from government, but instead from general public sources and from dialogue with

community members and Indigenous Nations. This was deemed inappropriate as well as ineffective, as community members and groups have been forced to conjecture what is and is not included in agreements.

7. The process by which the Province is negotiating reconciliation agreements is hindering progress that local groups are trying to make around reconciliation:

Almost all of the participants said that the way the Province is pursuing reconciliation agreements with Indigenous communities is not helping – and in fact is hindering – their own efforts in building relationships. Several groups said that their own relationship building activities have been put on a full hold by Indigenous communities – or are even moving backwards – because Indigenous Nations are only interested in their relationship with the Province.

3. Group-Specific Feedback:

This section summarizes some group-specific feedback that was provided during the interviews by local governments, the forestry sector, backcountry associations, environmental organizations, and Chambers of Commerce.

Local Governments:

Generally, there was agreement among local governments that the main issues they have with respect to Indigenous reconciliation initiatives lie in two key areas: lack of information, and lack of process.

With a lack of information, local governments said that they are left to speculate on what is being discussed at reconciliation tables. This has created a high degree of anxiety, which in some cases has morphed into anger, which has in turn stoked racial discord as people start to see reconciliation as creating winners and losers.

Local governments also shared that they have little confidence that provincial negotiators are reflecting or considering local government interests/issues at the negotiation table. This lack of confidence

exacerbates the sense of uncertainty and nervousness around outcomes and impacts on community plans, local economies, tax bases, etc.

Specifically, there was discussion that the potential transfer of land within municipalities could create “donuts and holes” in the community, and there is nervousness on what that might mean to municipal services, zoning, regulatory regimes, etc. It is the transition and implementation of these agreements that causes most of the stress, and the absence of any sense of what the agreements look like only magnifies the anxiety and uncertainty

Another common theme that emerged in discussions with local governments was the issue of capacity. Many participants observed that while others (federal and provincial governments, industry, etc) have increased their capacity and expertise in Indigenous relations, generally local governments have not. This lack of capacity limits the ability of local governments to fully engage in the ‘reset’ of relations with Indigenous Nations, and leaves them unable to have informed and meaningful input on complex initiatives with Indigenous communities.

Forest Tenure Holders:

The unique issues that were raised by forest tenure holders during the interviews were threefold.

First, there is a sense that licensees are being displaced in the reconciliation conversations, and that the Crown is using their tenure as a form of currency without any regard for potential impacts. Licensees shared that they feel as though they have been a partner with the Crown bound through the tenure agreements and in the stewardship and management of forest resources, and that this is not reflected in the transactional way tenure is now being used in reconciliation discussions.

“Reconciliation should be a very deep and far-reaching but now seems to be relegated to a transactional process and the province seems more interested in what it looks like than it what it really is.”

Second, while there was – as with the other groups interviewed – overall support for the broad objectives around reconciliation agreements, there was concern about those agreements will be

implemented. In short, forest tenure holders were clear that they are agnostic on the subject of who owns the harvesting rights to the fiber (in terms of the licensees versus Indigenous Nations), but they do have concerns about how any ownership changes might impact their operations. Specific reference was made to the fact that the northwest forestry sector is highly competitive and a difficult region to operate, and so the need to ensure smooth implementation of any changes is paramount.

Finally, and perhaps because of the unique nature of the forest industry in the northwest, participants expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of provincial negotiators to reach ‘workable’ agreements, particularly because of the complete absence of any involvement in those negotiations from the forest sector. Participants were clear that they were not vying for a place at the negotiation table, but did feel that they could add value to the process, both during negotiations and implementation.

“The northwest forest sector is highly competitive and specialized. If licensees lose, so will First Nations.”

Backcountry Associations:

Some of the specific comments received from backcountry associations (guide outfitters, cattlemen association, and wildlife organizations) included:

- Feeling that any input they provide into reconciliation negotiations are not taken seriously.
- Concerns regarding the potential loss of access to public lands as a result of new land designations or transfers.
- Risks to the loss of range access or ALR lands.
- Potential financial implications from reconciliation that could be fatal to small businesses.
- Concerns that negotiations are undertaken by people who do not have a vested interest in the area, and whose objectives are to conclude an agreement – not put in place a relationship.
- Lack of understanding about the ‘end-game’ and what reconciliation initiatives were trying to achieve

“Victoria based interests come into the region, negotiate the agreement, get to go home and we are left to pick up the pieces.”

Environmental Organizations:

Of all the groups interviewed, environmental organizations had a greater awareness of the different discussions that were going on between BC and Indigenous communities, but equally shared a lack of knowledge on what was being discussed or where those talks were going. As a result, they expressed a high level of concern on the trustworthiness of government.

“We find out the impact only after the process is finished, which fuels racism.”

Environmental organizations expressed very little confidence that the government acts in the interests of the public, as the public is the one group not involved in any discussions. They were also clear to point out that various interests need to be heard at these tables, including industry.

“Government believes that putting a document on a website constitutes engagement.”

The negotiation of the Nisga’a Treaty, LRMP’s, and mid-coast land use agreements were pointed to as examples of previous successful multi-party engagement processes.

Business Associations:

Chambers of Commerce have not typically been involved in consultation processes in the past and generally do not see that as their role today. They were very supportive of the Province concluding reconciliation agreements with Indigenous Nations, but were keenly aware that the absence of information was creating anxiety with the membership, and that there were concerns over the impacts of reconciliation agreements on the local economy, mainly tied to the resource sector.

4. Options for Engagement:

It is clear that local governments and stakeholders in the Skeena region do not feel adequately engaged by the Province on Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the area. In fact, for the most part, they do not feel engaged at all, nor do they feel they’ve been provided even basic information about reconciliation

initiatives – such as what they are for, what they include, who is negotiating them, where and when they will end, or how they will be implemented.

In order to address the issues that the lack of engagement and information-sharing has created (feelings of marginalization, mistrust, anger, confusion, frustration) – and to mitigate the inevitable opposition that will result – the following two options are offered as potential engagement processes for the Province to implement in the Skeena region. Both Options would provide local governments and stakeholders with a ‘one-window stop’ for information into Indigenous reconciliation initiatives in the region. This would help address any resourcing issues and enable the groups to discuss common issues among a range of tables.

Option 1 – Establish three Stakeholder Driven ‘Community Advisory Board (CAB)’ tables across the Highway 16 corridor.

- A CAB would be a stakeholder/local government-driven forum that would allow for two-way information sharing. It would be the point of contact for all reconciliation agreements within its defined geographic boundaries.
- The purpose of the CAB would be: to educate groups on the reconciliation process, to promote the positive attributes and value of reconciliation, to present strategies and tactics for implementation, and to allow groups to ask questions and provide observations on specific concerns.
- Examples of information that could be shared include at the CAB include:
 - Information on ‘why’ reconciliation agreements are being negotiated.
 - Context on how reconciliation can result in practical, real benefits to the community.
 - Information on how reconciliation agreements might be implemented, and how local governments and stakeholders may fit into that.
 - Information on how the Province will keep communities/businesses whole and ensure they are not detrimentally impacted.
 - Information about the Indigenous Nations that the Province is negotiating with, and how they will work with communities once reconciliation agreements are signed.

- Members of the CAB would consist of a full range of local governments and stakeholders, similar to the range of interests interviewed for this report. Once an initial table is established, participants could decide whether additional participants should be invited.
- The Chair and Executive of the CAB would manage Main-Table activities, meeting schedule, and agenda, and would be appointed by members. The Province would supply administration, communication and operations support to the CAB.
- The CAB could be organized into a ‘Main Table’ and Topic Specific sub-tables as required.
 - The Main Table sessions would be the place for discussion on topics common to all reconciliation negotiations.
 - Topic Specific Sub-Committees would be established as required to deal with specific topics (e.g. land transfers within municipal boundaries, tenure transfers, land designations etc.), and report back to the main CAB table.
- CAB boundaries could be established along Regional District lines (North Coast, Kitimat-Stikine, Bulkley-Stikine) or through traditional territorial boundaries (e.g. Tsimshian territory, Gitksan - Wet’suwet’en territory, Carrier territory). If the preference was for two tables, they could be divided geographically (possibly from Prince Rupert to Hazelton in the west, and Hazelton to Burns Lake in the east) although there may be a need to overlap the tables at times depending on the issues.

Benefits (Pros) of Establishing a CAB:

- Community-driven.
- Participants ‘own’ the process.
- Supports information-sharing.
- Encourages understanding of issues, reduces risk of backlash.
- Provides a forum for topic-specific issues (tenure transfers).
- May improve outcomes at reconciliation tables. Minimize risk of misinformation and rumours.
- May lead to smoother implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

- Minimizes the number of meetings local governments and stakeholders have to attend to stay informed of reconciliation initiatives in their area.

Risks (Cons) of Establishing a CAB:

- Will require provincial resources.
- May take a few sessions for participant-driven governance structure to be established.
- Province will not control the agenda.
- Will need to manage messaging to Indigenous Nations about the process.

Option 2 - Establish three Provincial Roundtables across the Highway 16 corridor.

In this option, the boundaries, composition, and purpose of the Roundtable would be the same as Option 1, but instead of being managed by the stakeholders and local governments, the Roundtables would be completely managed by the Province. The Province would set agenda, manage membership, identify subcommittees, and control information-sharing.

Pros of Establishing a Roundtable:

- Provides a forum for information-sharing.
- Encourages understanding of issues, reduces risk of backlash.
- May improve outcomes at reconciliation tables.
- May lead to smoother implementation of reconciliation initiatives.
- Province controls agenda.
- Minimizes the number of meetings local governments and stakeholders have to attend to stay informed of reconciliation initiatives in their area.

Cons of Establishing a Roundtable:

- Process will be seen as 'owned' by the Province, not by members.
- The Province will 'wear' any outcomes.

- May be more difficult to secure support for process.
- May be seen as a provincial communication tool (political).
- Will require provincial resources.
- Will need to manage messaging to Indigenous Nations about the process.

Additional Considerations:

In addition to establishing either a stakeholder/local government-driven CAB, or provincial-driven Roundtable process, the Province may want to also consider implementing the following engagement approaches in the Skeena region:

1. Establish a ‘tenure-specific’ table as a sub-group to each CAB or Roundtable:

Given that perceived impacts of tenure transfers on the continuity of commercial activities is a main contributor to the tensions and anxiety in many of the other stakeholder groups, a specific table for tenure holders might be helpful.

The purpose of a tenure-specific table would be to solicit general transitional strategies, tactics, and/or practices where the Province is considering tenure transfers. The table would not discuss details around specific tenure transfers, but could be a technical group with a focus is on developing a set of practices or conditions that might be incorporated into an agreement with an Indigenous community, and that could help develop an implementation/transition plan to ensure a smooth transfer of tenure (e.g. timelines, phasing-in conditions). This would likely minimize any disruptions to current activities and relationships, and also lays the groundwork for groups to start visualize the upside to reconciliation agreements. Tenure holders generally operate as competitors not collaborators and will always represent their self-interest. But as most have already recognized that tenure transfers (partial or whole) are a real possibility, many have turned their heads to how can they stay relevant, protect the ir investments, and continue to prosper and grow. In addition, they have technical and commercial expertise that can add value and support to the reconciliation process.

A tenure-specific table could be established on its own if the Province decides not to set up a broader table such as a CAB process, but this would not fully address the needs and interests of local governments and stakeholders in the area.

The advantages of establishing a tenure-specific table are:

- It would provide a forum for information-sharing to a key stakeholder group.
- It allows for discussion of complex technical issues.
- It provides the Province access to additional industry and commercial and technical expertise
- It minimizes any market disruptions from tenure transfers, improving the economic viability of the industry.
- It may improve outcomes at reconciliation tables and lead to smoother implementation.

The Province will need to be manage the tenure-specific tables carefully to ensure they do not veer into tenure-specific discussions or raise expectations, and will also need to manage messaging to Indigenous Nations to ensure the tables are not viewed as competition to their reconciliation discussions and objectives.

2. Resource regional districts for expertise in Indigenous relations:

Currently local governments do not have human, financial resources nor expertise in complex Indigenous negotiations and require resourcing to allow them to meaningfully participate.

Reconciliation will not be achieved where all participants are not on an equal footing. Having one party at the table under resourced is not conducive to achieving fulsome informed participation, sound outcomes and real reconciliation.

3. Distribute information on reconciliation initiatives on an on-going, consistent basis directly to local governments and stakeholders.

One of the primary themes that emerged most consistently during the interviews was the lack of information that participants feel they have received from the Province on reconciliation initiatives. In

order to mitigate this, at a minimum the Province could send out regular and coordinated information bulletins directed specifically at local governments and stakeholders about reconciliation initiatives in the region. This information could include background information as well as specific details on agreements, when appropriate.

4. Undertake an assessment on how to incorporate Indigenous participation into the CAB or Roundtable process:

The CAB process in particular, has the potential to include Indigenous participation that would create a forum where stakeholders, local governments, and Indigenous Nations have a place to exchange information and build relationships. An all-inclusive table could also help manage expectations – on all sides – regarding outcomes of reconciliation agreements, and be a forum for developing implementation plans around land and timber transfers that builds supports for the reconciliation process. The Province may want to undertake further work around how an inclusive process might be designed, particularly in terms of structure, representation, agenda, functions, etc. to manage any of the risks associated with a combined CAB.

Conclusion:

Local governments and stakeholders in the Skeena region that were interviewed for this report are clearly aligned with the Province and Indigenous Nations on the value, objective, and necessity of reconciliation. There is a complete misalignment and disconnect, however, on the process to achieve reconciliation. The information-sharing and process gap across the region regarding provincial Indigenous reconciliation initiatives is quickly eroding the foundational support that currently exists. There is a real need to more fully involve the groups who will be part of the implementation of reconciliation initiatives if true reconciliation is to be achieved.

Appendix A – List of Organizations Interviewed

| Organization | Date Interviewed |
|--|-------------------|
| Municipalities and Regional Districts | |
| 1. City of Prince Rupert | February 22, 2021 |
| 2. District of Kitimat | February 18, 2021 |
| 3. District of New Hazelton | February 18, 2021 |
| 4. District of Granisle | February 17, 2021 |
| 5. District of Houston | February 24, 2021 |
| 6. District of Port Edward | February 22, 2021 |
| 7. North Coast Regional District | February 22, 2021 |
| 8. Town of Smithers | February 17, 2021 |
| 9. Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako | February 24, 2021 |
| 10. Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine | February 18, 2021 |
| 11. Village of Burns Lake | February 17, 2021 |
| 12. Village of Hazelton | February 18, 2021 |
| 13. Village of Houston | February 24, 2021 |
| 14. Village of Telkwa | February 24, 2021 |
| 15. City of Terrace | February 24, 2021 |
| Forest Tenure Holders | |
| 16. AA Trading | February 25, 2021 |
| 17. Canfor | February 25, 2021 |
| 18. Hampton | February 23, 2021 |
| 19. NorthPac Forestry Group | February 25, 2021 |
| 20. Skeena Sawmills | February 25, 2021 |
| 21. West Fraser | February 25, 2021 |
| Chambers of Commerce | |
| 22. Houston | February 18, 2021 |
| 23. Kitimat | February 18, 2021 |
| 24. Prince Rupert | February 18, 2021 |

| Organization | Date Interviewed |
|---|-------------------|
| 25. Terrace | February 18, 2021 |
| 26. Smithers | February 18, 2021 |
| Environmental Organizations | |
| 27. MakeWay | February 24, 2021 |
| 28. Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition | February 24, 2021 |
| 29. Skeena Wild | February 24, 2021 |
| Backcountry Associations/Other | |
| 30. BC Wildlife Federation | February 22, 2021 |
| 31. BV Research Center | February 23, 2021 |
| 32. Copper River Outfitters | February 22, 2021 |
| 33. Guide Outfitters of BC | February 22, 2021 |
| 34. Kalum LRMP Implementation Committee | February 23, 2021 |
| 35. Lakes District Cattleman Association | February 22, 2021 |
| 36. Lakes TSA Coalition | February 23, 2021 |
| 37. Smithers Exploration Group | February 23, 2021 |
| 38. Snow Valley Nordic Ski Club | February 23, 2021 |
| Did Not Participate in Interview | |
| 39. District of Stewart | N/A |
| 40. Wildlife for Tomorrow | N/A |
| 41. Northwest Guide Outfitters Association | N/A |

Appendix B – List of Guiding Questions

1. What is your level of awareness of current Indigenous reconciliation talks between local Indigenous groups and BC?
2. What is your understanding of government requirements regarding local and stakeholder engagement?
3. Why do they you want to be consulted on Indigenous reconciliation initiatives? What are some of your key concerns?
4. What are some of the gaps in terms of knowledge in your group in this area?
5. What capacity do you need to fully engage in discussions (e.g. technical, resourcing)?
6. What has worked in previous engagement processes? Why was it successful? What hasn't worked? Why did it not work?
7. What are the best ways for government to engage with your group and why (technology, forums, process etc.)?
8. How would you measure whether a process is appropriate or successful?
9. What type of process would provide you with the best outcome?



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REGIONAL DISTRICT OF
BULKLEY-NECHAKO

153 Francois Lake Drive, Box 788
Burns Lake, B.C. V0J 1E0
(250) 692-7724
info@blcomfor.com

December 17th, 2021

Dear Curtis Helgeson, RDBN;

The purpose of this letter is to express our grave concern about the Government's expressed policy intention to harmonize stumpage policy for community forests with the policy for First Nations Woodland Licenses consistent with the market-based timber pricing system, in B.C. We want to emphasize that area base tenure objectives and the success of local community socio-economic success *is only made* possible by the existing community forest timber pricing policy (tabular rates).

We know, that as local Government and leaders you understand the adverse implications of the mountain pine beetle epidemic in regard to the socio-economic health of our forest dependent, small, northern and First Nation communities. The way forward for community forests is to innovatively manage area-based tenures in this era of 'super wildfires', climate change, and the ever-changing social expectations of the natural resource sector.

Through the policy intentions of Government as expressed in the document *Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia* is undermining the effective and long-term sustainability of these tenures.

The Government has specifically identified the need to strengthen the social license, adopt the principles of UNDRIP, develop and implement community fire risk prevention and response, and have broadly recognized that success will require modernization of land-use plans and legislation. Summarized, the *Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia* document indicates that the motivation for changing community forest timber pricing is to strengthen the social contract by:

- Supporting local communities by ensuring the growth of good jobs and long-term economic opportunities
- Ensuring that local communities, including indigenous communities, have opportunities to benefit from the resources coming from their own backyards
- Maximizing BC's benefit in terms of jobs and value from our resources

Specifically, the following areas will be negatively impacted if community forests are placed under the market-based timber pricing system;

1. First Nations will see a dramatic decrease in dividends coming from community forests. Currently, BLCOMFOR has a net profit distribution to First Nations Partners and shareholders of 25-30% annually
2. First Nations with partnerships with forestry companies, from cruising to planting to stand tending and harvesting will be directly impacted. On average the contract bids coming from First Nations with partnership are 25-40% higher than the bid average. Community forests will be faced with taking the lowest bids as there will be less monies available to offset extra costs to award to these ventures.
3. Education and training of First Nation groups will be much harder to finance. Training for wildfire Type 2 First Nation for example in Burns Lake will cease to exist.
4. Forest management, innovation and flexibility will not be possible. Innovation is expensive short term, but the long-term effects outweigh this cost. Ecosystem restoration (moose, grizzly bear, fisher, marten) partial harvesting, research, and wildfire mitigation projects carried out in community forests will be faced with either reducing or cancelling all together.
5. Donations available for non-profit groups throughout the region will be impacted.

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6. Community forest's ability to be flexible and plan effectively for budgeting will become cumbersome as the rise and fall of the market-based timber pricing system will make long-term planning a "best guess".
 7. Forest Stewardship Council certification, which is Internationally recognised, will no longer be a certification community forests can afford.
 8. In communities where Regional Districts and Village offices are stakeholders the dividends returning to these areas to benefit the communities will diminish.

The proposed timber pricing policy change undermines the ability of community forests to achieve the very objectives and benefits described above, that the Government, communities, and First Nations partners seek and value to remain viable self-sufficient entities.

A community forest's ability to support community initiatives, increase local employment, be innovative in forest management, and broadly develop our local, small, rural communities is directly tied to the benefits derived from the tabular rate pricing system. The existing pricing system for community forests is critical to achieving the Government's objectives for the program and to satisfying the motivations of Government expressed in the bullet points above.

The Government is proposing to harmonize community forest timber pricing policy with the policy that applies to large corporations. Such a policy intention seems to disregard the fact that community forests are legally bound to accomplish the objectives set by the Province for the community forest program. These objectives are profoundly different than the strictly commercial objectives of large corporations and achieving them directly affects the cost structure of community forest operations, as does timber pricing policy.

We encourage your leadership to express your concerns with the proposed changes to timber pricing policy by writing to Minister Conroy expressing the desire to leave the pricing for community forest license (area base) tenure as they are, as, without this system, many of our community forests will close their doors negatively impacting First Nations and communities.

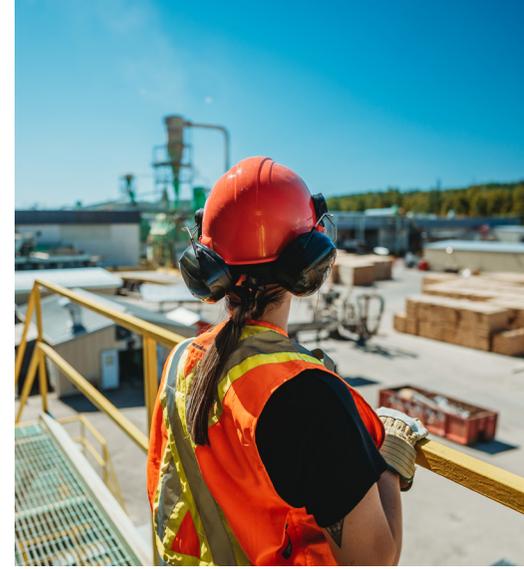
If you have questions please contact the Burns Lake Community Forest.

Respectfully,



Canfor Calls on BC Government to Rethink Old Growth Deferral Process

Together We Can Protect Our Forests AND Workers AND Communities



Dear British Columbians,

At Canfor, we're proud to have been operating in the province for over 80 years.

We take our role very seriously to help responsibly manage BC's forests. Like all British Columbians, we want our forests to be diverse, thriving ecosystems. We employ hundreds of professionals, like foresters and biologists, who work hard every day to ensure our activities are environmentally responsible and will contribute to healthy forests for generations to come.

Around the world BC is respected for our leading sustainable harvesting and forest management practices. We follow rigorous environmental standards and get permits from the government for all of our activities we undertake in the forest. BC's Chief Forester sets the volume of trees that can be harvested. Each year this amounts to less than 1% of the harvestable area. We also plant three trees for each one that is harvested.

In addition, we greatly respect the rights and title of First Nations on whose traditional territories we operate and their valued roles in stewarding the forests.

That's why we're deeply concerned that the BC government has decided to defer 2.6 million hectares of old forests based on the advice of only five people. Government has not engaged with a broad group of Indigenous leaders, labour leaders, forest professionals and communities. Many important voices have been left out of this critical discussion.

“Many important voices have been left out of this critical discussion.”

Industry estimates that nearly 18,000 workers could be impacted. These are good people from communities across the province who care about the future and the environment in the place they call home. We directly employ over 4,000 people in BC. The more than 2,000 contractors, suppliers and Indigenous companies we

partner with also employ thousands of people who work in the forest sector and, along with their families, contribute to our local communities.

This should be a time for unity. We can choose a path that brings First Nations, labour leaders, forestry professionals and communities together to develop a sustainable old growth management plan that protects our forests and ensures sustainable employment for our communities. We can build on the 75% of old growth forests that are already protected or outside harvesting areas.

To develop that plan, we are asking government, on behalf of our employees, Indigenous partners, contractors and communities, to immediately take the following steps:

1. Use the facts, based on objective and transparent science and Indigenous traditional knowledge, to identify potential old growth areas and deferrals.
2. Undertake a collaborative process that includes Indigenous leaders, labour leaders, forest professionals and communities to develop the old growth plan.

As the world comes together to fight climate change, carbon-storing, renewable forestry products from BC's sustainably managed forests are in growing demand. This is BC's opportunity to help support the transition to a low carbon world. Now more than ever, the world needs BC's forestry products. And that's something we can each be proud of.



“Let's work together.”

Don Kayne
President & CEO
Canfor