

A recent opinion article 'Logging in Watersheds' was submitted to the Nelson Star by members of the Interior Lumber Manufacturer's Association.

The article states "If things go wrong here, we can't shift to a new location." Well, things are going wrong now: in the face of climate disruptions and the knowledge that resource extraction is exceeding supply, the public and provincial /regional governments are becoming aware that something needs to change. The current archaic system of clearcuts and slash burning is not viable or sustainable today. Questions are being asked about professional reliance and 'best practices', and doubt is being raised about how logging fits into the landscape of BC today, both economically and environmentally.

The government stated on Oct 3rd that they were going to complete a review of the professional reliance model to ensure public interest is protected. Self regulation, or professional reliance, is the results-based management model where professionals, accountable for their own actions and responsible to the public, are employed by private timber companies.

Would you care to comment? The Government is asking for your opinion and input, with a deadline of **Jan 19, 2018**. See: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/professionalreliance/ways-to-participate/>

In her article "Bringing Public Confidence to B.C.'s Forest Management", the CEO of the BC Association of Forest Professionals, Christine Gelowitz stated that the forest industry generates \$12.9 billion in GDP. This echoes the CEO of the ILMA "The importance of the forest industry can't be overstated." Actually, it can be overstated, and it often is overstated.

The figure of 12.9 billion GDP is not accurate. BC Stats records the approximate GDP for the forest industry AND its related fields at about 7 billion GDP. Other industries: real estate, construction, retail, and manufacturing all contribute a higher GDP to the province over the timber industry. If confidence is being encouraged, it would be good if the figures were accurate. Does this mean that the logging industry in our local economy is any less important because of industry-wide inaccuracies? Not necessarily, but it does tend to make one more aware.

The ILMA article states: "we care deeply about doing the work we do — including harvesting in watersheds — carefully, sustainably, and to the high environmental standards we have in this province." But in a September ILMA presentation to RDCK, the ILMA stated very clearly that 'no watershed is too fragile to log in'. This care-less attitude is at the core of the problem. Mitigation is the industry watchword, not care or caution.

And a cautious attitude is what the stakeholders want to see. And that has not been the experience of many of the watershed stakeholders that we have spoken to. Watershed advocates believe that the value that the forest adds to the health and welfare of all life is paramount and how we care for the elements of nature that provide us with these benefits should be foremost in our actions. This is evident through the countless volunteer hours that are dedicated to ensuring that future generations have forests that will continue to produce clean water.

As stakeholders we live, work, and play in the forests. Water users bear the responsibility and the costs associated with potable water so we have a vested interest to have clean, clear water and healthy, vibrant forests. The water users of these watersheds are some of the most passionate advocates for healthy forests and water systems that you'll ever meet.

This is our home, and we care deeply about protecting watersheds to ensure water for future generations, especially in this time of climate disruption and care-less resource extraction.

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