

PAULINE RAVEN

2021.12.08

Re: Old Growth Forestry Policy
Via Email: ecologicalforestry@novascotia.ca

To Whom it May Concern:

Like many Nova Scotians, I am watching the application of what appears to be deeply flawed policies and regulations in the Province of British Columbia that permit the clear-cutting of BC forests that are home to various species of very old growth trees. There, despite the actions of conservation groups lead by First Nation elders, iconic components of our landscapes are disappearing.

Many experts are linking the wholesale destruction of forests to the devastating floods recently experienced on our opposite coast. Of course, Nova Scotia is very different from British Columbia: it is for those more knowledgeable than me to draw whatever parallels exist between our forestry practices and those of Horgan's NDP government. However, I couldn't help but see similarities between the Fraser and Annapolis Valleys. I feel confident in advising a "first do no harm" approach to our forests in general, and old growth stands in particular.

Our own 12-acre woodlot on the South Mountain of Kings County has some older trees. It has been logged selectively for firewood purposes over our 40-years of ownership. I have some curiosity regarding how much carbon this small acreage sequesters while our overuse of fossil fuels continues and how much water during heavy rainfalls it holds at bay for us all.

I have read estimates of the need for 200 or more years for carbon to be re-absorbed by smaller fast-growing trees once old growth is cut. I think we can agree that climate crisis calls for immediate action. We do not have 20, never mind 200-years, to wait for the return of current carbon-sinks that are being lost.

My key reason for writing is to ask you to place significantly more weight on input from scientists that do not represent that part of Nova Scotia's Forest sector whose clear-cutting practices are arguably only profit-driven and to urge you to carefully consider alternatives when the "jobs jobs jobs" argument is forwarded as a reason to permit more clear-cuts of old growth stands by the forestry sector. This 2-billion-dollar industry can be replaced by more engagement in the green economy.

I recently learned that only one Nova Scotia clean energy project had a signed memorandum of understanding with the Canada Infrastructure Bank (the Pirate Harbour Wind Farm, December 2019). Coupled with the knowledge that NS is considered a laggard in terms of significantly decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels, there is reason for Nova Scotia's new government to advance, versus neglect, existing opportunities.

For example, positive feasibility studies aimed at installation of the largest solar array east of Quebec have been produced for a brownfield in North Kentville, Kings County. This is slated as a prominent component of the county's strategic plan and would be located on a former landfill site. These studies have confirmed the feasibility in ever more detail as time progressed. As I understand it, the prior government would not commit to being the partner Kings County needs for the project to move forward.

In closing, I return to the central issue of Old Growth Forest Policy and ask that our old stands be provided greater protection. Nature Nova Scotia has produced two carefully considered papers on this topic. These deserve careful review during policy renewal discussions and can be viewed at <https://naturens.ca/nova-scotian-naturalists-respond-to-the-draft-old-growth-forest-policy>

As we face this climate emergency, remaining forests are serving us nobly and doing climate action work at little cost. Any perceived 'lost opportunity cost' we might face by letting our forests be can easily be replaced by innovative partnerships with other levels of government.

As a grandmother, I see perilous times ahead for our children and grandchildren and an urgent need for the climate emergency to be the policy lens through which every decision is filtered. These times demand a renewed respect for nature and the work it performs. I hope our governments will more fully recognize this and act accordingly before the fate of all our forests, old growth or not, is decided.

Sincerely,



Pauline Raven

CC:
Honorable John Lohr, MLA Kings North;
Peter Muttart, Mayor County of Kings