



File: 19720-01, 19460-01
Reference: 269661

April 4, 2022

Dear Woodlot Licensees/Cherry Ridge Community Forest/Bamfield Community Forest:

In 2019, the Government of British Columbia embarked on a new approach to old forests, commissioning an independent panel to engage British Columbians and collect their views on the importance and future of old-growth in the province. The panel's report was received in 2020, and government has taken decisive action to act on the recommendations. In November 2021, government released a report and mapping from a technical advisory panel (TAP) that identified old-growth at risk of irreversible biodiversity loss that was to be protected over the short-term, while a longer-term strategy is developed. The TAP reports and map information is available on the [old growth website](#).

After further assessment of impacts and the ability for some licensees to efficiently utilize a ministry field verification methodology, I have made a policy decision to exempt woodlot licences, and the two community forests that are managed under the woodlot legislative regime, from the priority old-growth big tree polygons except where there is overlap with ancient or remnant polygons.

To be clear, where First Nations do not support old-growth deferrals, there will not be an expectation for deferral of harvesting in any old-growth areas identified by the TAP. To meet the broad goals of government and acknowledge the public interest, licensees may wish to consider voluntary protection of old-growth components within their licence area.

Please contact local district staff for additional information. Sector associations may contact Doug Kelly, Director (Doug.Kelly@gov.bc.ca), at the Forest Tenures Branch on implementation of this policy.

Sincerely,

Katrine Conroy
Minister

pc: Rick Manwaring, Deputy Minister of Forests
Eamon O'Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister of Forests
Sarah Fraser, Assistant Deputy Minister, Rural Opportunities, Tenures and
Engineering Division
Richard Elliott, Executive Director, Rural Opportunities, Tenures and
Engineering Division
All Ministry Regional Executive Directors
All Ministry District Managers
Doug Kelly, Director, Forest Tenures Branch
Keith Atkinson, Chief Executive Officer, BC First Nations Forestry Council
Mark Clark, President, Federation of BC Woodlot Associations
Brian McNaughton, General Manager, Federation of BC Woodlot Associations
George Brcko, President, BC Community Forest Association
Jennifer Gunter, Executive Director, BC Community Forest Association