

Draft

December xx, 2021

Honourable Katrine Conroy
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
PO Box 9049 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Via email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Conroy:

Re: Local government support for Community Forests

This letter is in support of Community Forests and specifically the Qala:yit Community Forest (K5U), held jointly by the Cowichan Lake Community Forest Cooperative and The Pacheedaht First Nation. Both the Town of Lake Cowichan and the Cowichan Valley Regional District have representatives on the Board of the Lake Cowichan Community Forest Cooperative.

The Qala:yit Community Forest was established in 2018 and has provided significant ongoing benefits including:

- Local management of the area-based tenure on a sustainable basis.
- employment of a variety of forestry contractors, consultants, logging and road building contractors engaged in the various ongoing planning, management and operational activities on the forest.
- Sorting and manufacture of logs produced to ensure best utilization. Logs from this community forest have gone to a variety of destinations including local manufacturers Karlite Manufacturing Ltd, Lake Cowichan Lumber, Chambers, Coastland Industries, Otter Point Poles, and the Pacheedaht sawmill.
- Donation of a canoe log to Pacheedaht First Nation which was carved and launched in 2021. Another log from Qala:yit Community Forest is now a new totem at Maffeo Sutton Park in Nanaimo.
- Distribution of revenues to the Lake Cowichan Community Forest Cooperative and the Pacheedaht First Nation which have supported a variety of community and economic development initiatives. During 2021 support in the community ranged from bursaries for students to the Cowichan Hospice House.
(<https://www.cowichanvalleycitizen.com/community/cowichan-lake-community-forest-co-op-donates-100k-to-hospice-house/>)

In consideration of the above and other direct and indirect benefits the Qala:yit Community Forest provides the local community and the Province of British Columbia we are concerned that possible changes from legislation and regulation could have negative impacts on the current management of the community forest. One significant concern is that the Province has set an intention to consider changes to stumpage applied to specific tenure types: Community Forest Agreements, Woodlot Licences and First Nation Woodland Licences. The tabular stumpage system in place currently allows Community Forests opportunity to realize greater benefits and revenues from operations. Administration for both the community forest and the province are streamlined as a result and the current system allows for simplified permitting.

Changes to the current system of tabular stumpage need to be carefully considered so that costs, efficiency, and benefits to the community forest are not adversely affected. Communities and First Nations that are currently benefiting from the community forest will be directly impacted.

We are most appreciative of the benefits the Qala:yit Community Forest has provided to date and we look forward to sustained benefits in the future, just as a well managed forest can provide on a sustainable basis. Our request is that your Ministry does not adversely impact the current tabular stumpage system but looks to means that will enhance and improve operations and benefits from Community Forests.

Sincerely yours,