



May 28, 2021

## **WORKING TO COUNTER ANTI LOGGING PROTESTER MISINFORMATION & PROTECT OUR JOBS IN THE WORKING FORESTS**

The United Steelworkers Local 1-1937 is mindful of the history of anti-logging protests against the work our members perform in the working forests. While we strongly oppose illegal blockades, we acknowledge the rights of individuals to peacefully protest. We also want to be clear that in doing so, protestors must not endanger the lives of workers and should consider the danger they put themselves in when they illegally enter active logging areas. Safety must be first and foremost in everyone's mind and as such we are supportive of the RCMP keeping the peace and enforcing the law within TFL 46 or any other area where illegal blockades take place.

All British Columbians should know that the sustainable annual allowable harvest in this Province is set by BC's independent chief forester who manages for multiple objectives including conservation, biodiversity, cultural uses, jobs and the economy. Many citizens are however unaware that there are agenda driven environmental organizations that misuse the province's data and make false claims that harvesting is harming the environment and is unsustainable.

Our organization firmly believes it is the goal of these environmental groups to have the Provincial Government react emotionally and without due process, instead of through the due diligence contemplated in the Old Growth Strategic Review process. It is clear to our Union that consultation with First Nations, Industry, workers, and other stakeholders, utilizing a science-based approach across all of BC's forests, (as called for in the Review), is what is truly needed if we are to end division and chaos created by continuing the valley-by-valley protest and blockade approach desired by environmental groups.

Our Union knows that by engaging these organizations directly on the ground or in the media, is a process that only serves their purpose of creating more division, more uncertainty and better opportunity to further their misinformation. These groups want confrontation for the purpose of creating media coverage, which is a key tool that drives their worldwide fundraising efforts.

**To support our membership, Local 1-1937 has chosen to invest significant time and resources in working closely with the forest industry (through the Council of Forest Industries - COFI), through which we hope to create an information campaign to assist in educating the public on the facts. As part of this campaign, we are attempting to speak to all Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) from both parties as it's important to help them understand the issues so they may have informed responses when questions are raised by their constituents.**

The Local Union, in conjunction with the industry, also plans to offer to do the same for Local Government Officials, especially in those communities that may have passed anti-old-growth logging motions without having a clear understanding of the complex issues involved. **We believe that it is important that our political leaders at all levels understand forestry issues, so they may decipher what is factual and what is not, in the age of social media.**

Our direct engagement with the Forest Minister and her ministry over our issues of tenure security and forest health as part of the Old Growth Strategic Review and its implementation will continue. In this forum, we are speaking directly to the decision makers when it comes to forest policy and we believe this approach gives us the best opportunity to ensure good long-term solutions for all British Columbians.

**The Local Union continues to encourage members and their families to send letters to the government in support of forest workers and their communities. For those looking for a quick way to do this please go to [www.usw1-1937.ca](http://www.usw1-1937.ca) and under News & Events scroll to “Letter to John Horgan”. It takes one minute to send a supportive letter to protect jobs in the working forests. Our provincial government needs to hear from you and your family.**

**Many people, including some of our own members, may be unaware that in Coastal BC (by the Forest Ministry’s own data), the amount of old-growth forest (250 years or older) is actually increasing each year, even with the small amount that is harvested annually. This is because BC is a world leader in forest conservation having permanently conserved 70% of all old growth forests as well as many areas of the province where the forests are not yet considered old growth, but are growing older faster than the small sustainable old growth harvest we have today. With 52% of BC’s entire land base having a conservation measure on it, our province has plenty to be proud of for its world class and certifiable forest practices.**

We should all be proud of the work our members perform. It is difficult, often dangerous but very rewarding work. It remains an essential service that supports our families and powers the economy in our communities and across our Province. One final reminder to members: Please do not take the bait and engage with protesters if they are found blocking access to your work site. It only serves the protestors’ purpose of creating a rallying point, gain media exposure, fundraise and further their ultimate goal of ending commercial logging.

**Our Local Union will continue to work with the Government, First Nations, and Industry to ensure working forests, including old growth, continue to support good paying Union jobs in a sustainable, accessible and productive manner, so it can remain the economic backbone across our Province.**

Please stay safe everyone.

In Solidarity,



Brian Butler  
President  
United Steelworkers  
Local 1-1937