



May 3, 2017

Sharon Hadway, Regional Executive Director,  
West Coast Operations  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
Suite #103 – 2100 Labieux Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6E9

Dear Sharon,

Our board and the communities of Haida Gwaii are requesting a formal offer of a community forest tenure for Haida Gwaii, with the understanding that a business-to-business relationship will be negotiated with BC Timber Sales.

This follows a series of public meetings from March 23-30th that were attended by many islanders from diverse interests and backgrounds. The meetings were intense with frustration that the current model will not be a "community forest" that offers the same opportunities for revenue and forest stewardship as the other 53 community forests in BC. There were questions that ministry staff were unable to answer about the quality and forecasting of the forest inventory and the likelihood that this land base could be managed for a steady flow of 80,000 m<sup>3</sup> allowable annual cut (AAC). The March 2017 regulation that requires 50 percent of the financial returns after net costs to go to government was viewed with much concern in addition to the constraints of the tenure. These were weighty conversations and will place a great deal of responsibility on all parties to address the public expectations. I have attached a record of the public meetings for you to review.

Based on public feedback we would like to see five points addressed with the offer or subsequent agreement with BC Timber Sales:

1. A revenue agreement with BC Timber Sales that sees 100% of the net revenues flow to Haida Gwaii, much like any other of the 53 Community Forests in BC would have the opportunity to invest profits into their communities and region. Because this tenure was proposed by the Minister and executives of the Crown over seven years before the recent revenue regulation came into effect, we believe that would be eminently fair. Other community forests are not as constrained in terms of local

employment and operations as this one will be with the Crown's requirement to produce competitive sales market pricing data.

2. Area based tenure in the Collison Point and Nadu Road areas rather than the proposed Tasu Sewell Inlet area. Because the Tasu Sewell area is not accessible by any of the public, it is difficult to engage communities in forest development planning, stewardship, and harvesting which is one of the purposes of a community forest.
3. Timber analyst rationale on how the proposed area is determined to carry 80,000 AAC, as well as a projection of how the land base can support that harvest over the near and mid-term time horizons. Janine North, Executive Director and Nick Reynolds, CHN Stewardship Planning Coordinator would be happy to collaborate with Forest Inventory Branch staff to achieve this. The rationale will be shared with the public and should be written for public comprehension. There was also strong public demand for better quality maps of the proposed area. I understand that there is a new GIS resource person at the local office and we are hopeful that can improve the map for the public.
4. A commitment to a timely process to approve the tenure. We propose that if an offer can be made by late May, we will provide a forest management plan using the attached principles. It could be submitted after full public consultation during late June/early July. That should allow a tenure to be authorized this fall and for BCTS sales to be offered within the community forest before the end of 2017. Janine is committed to working closely with BC Timber Sales and reaching an agreement on the business-to-business relationship in the near future. She will work with the local BCTS staff on the development planning and public consultation for blocks that are proposed for the community forest tenure over the next five years.
5. Alignment of the tenure with the Reconciliation Protocol, which respects co-jurisdictional authority for issuing new licences on Haida Gwaii.

During public consultation we witnessed a passionate desire for more local control and support to request an offer from government for a community forest on Haida Gwaii. Because of the constraints of the potential offer, public demands were for increased flexibility to offer local employment in forest development and processing opportunities. Residents were also focused on a full flow of revenues to Haida Gwaii after development costs were covered. The respect for, and honour of the Crown and its social licence will rest on the degree to which the concerns of the public are addressed through the proposed business relationship with BC Timber Sales.

We look forward to submitting a management plan upon receiving the offer, and finalizing a Community Forest tenure that will benefit all island residents of Haida Gwaii and showcase sustainable area based forest management for our citizens.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Merilees", written in a cursive style.

Andrew Merilees  
Chair, Misty Isles Economic Development Society  
Mayor of Masset

Cc. Tim Sheldan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
Peter Lantin, President, Council of Haida Nation  
Trevor Russ, Vice President, Council of Haida Nation  
Len Munt, District Manager, Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations  
Kerry Grozier, Chinook Business Unit Manager, BC Timber Sales  
Colin Richardson, Stewardship Director, Council of Haida Nation  
Janine North, Executive Director, Misty Isles Economic Development Society

Enclosures:

Forest Management Principles for the Haida Gwaii Community Forest  
Community Forest Public Information Sessions Summary