

November 25, 2003

Hon. Gordon Campbell  
Premier  
PO Box 9041  
Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, BC  
V8W 9E1  
VIA FACSIMILE: 250 387 0087

Hon. Michael de Jong  
Minister of Forests  
PO Box 9049  
Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9E2  
VIA FACSIMILE: 250 387 1040

Dear Premier Campbell and Minister de Jong,

On October 22-23 First Nations from throughout the province met in Prince George to discuss their concerns about the development of new forest legislation by your government. This unilateral approach without consultation and accommodation within our territories will continue to increase legal uncertainty on the land. First Nations have jurisdiction of land and resources and recent court decisions support our claims.

We are aware that the goal of your government is to increase certainty and decision making control for the forest industry, while attempting to manage two risks that could undermine these goals: the Canada-United States softwood lumber dispute and the Province's legal obligations to First Nations. The Province has now translated its negotiating position into law and policy. You purport to be limited in further negotiations with First Nations by your unilateral actions (ex. limited revenue sharing and forest tenure opportunities) while attempting to abrogate your fiduciary duty to consult.

We want to share with you what the united voice of First Nations throughout BC have affirmed at the meetings in Prince George:

- We will stand united in the face of threats by the provincial Crown and resource industries to our Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.
- Only the First Nations of BC can provide the certainty that the provincial Crown and resource industries are seeking. Until proper accommodation occurs neither businesses nor their investors will have the certainty they seek.
- We seek reconciliation with the provincial Crown. The terms of our engagement for this process include:
  - Jurisdiction over allocation and management decisions (decision-making authority);
  - Compensation for past activities;

- Revenue-sharing;
- Exclusive use and occupation of specified areas within our traditional territories; and
- Openness/fairness and accommodation of First Nations in forestry and range law and policy changes.

We call upon your government to repeal the forest legislation (both the *Forest Act* and the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and recommend that negotiations be undertaken with all First Nations in British Columbia to accommodate their interests within their territories.

We await your response.

Sincerely,

cc: BC First Nations