

BC Timber Sales  
Chinook Business Area  
7077 Duncan Street  
Powell River, BC  
V8A 1W1

Elphinstone, May 22, 2025

**Re: The Elphinstone Community Association remains strongly opposed to logging of TA0519 located in our Aquifer Recharge Area**

Sir/Madam

We, the members of the Elphinstone Community Association (ECA) would like to thank BCTS for the opportunity to meet with representatives of your organisation for a tour of the proposed Cut Block TA0519 and a follow up question and answer session with residents in the Frank West Community Hall on March 19, 2025. In addition, the following morning some of the representatives met with one of our ECA members to view flood damage to private, commercial, provincial and local government infrastructure at the mouth of Chaster and Smales/Whitaker Creeks.

As per your Agency's request, no formal minutes of the cut block tour, the hall meeting or the creek site tours were taken. Notes were permitted during the hall meeting and only allowed to be published after editing and approval by BCTS. This curtailing of our ability to keep a proper record, it must be stated, was met with deep skepticism and did absolutely nothing to rebuild your trust with the local community (as BCTS acknowledged it needed to do).

The willingness of BCTS's "*Sunshine Coast Team*", to attend in person and to identify what they were and were not responsible for was however much appreciated as was the obvious sincerity of the presenters and information provided.

This letter then is a summary of what we understood was said to us and our responses with regards to the proposed Cut Block TSL TA0519.

We thank you for following the recommendations of the July 2023, Polar Geoscience Ltd, *Mount Elphinstone South Watershed Assessment* to **not** clear-cut TSL TA0519. We understand that the assessments on a proposed partial harvest of 38ha to remove 33% of the volume across all species of the 55-60 year old trees have been completed. Regrettably, how this is to be accomplished - handheld chainsaws or some type of heavy machine - could not be confirmed as that would be at the discretion of the contractor. How the trees would be harvested so as to minimize soil disturbance and water flow is a critical component of any proposed prescription in this area and therefore it was surprising that the contract would not specify these details.

Further the answers to the question of the fate of the remaining 66% of trees were conflicting. During the site visit of the cut-block, BCTS noted that in approximately 10

years an additional 33% of the trees would be cut and then in 10 more years the remaining 33% would be taken. When another resident asked the very same question at the community meeting, BCTS responded that it did not have any further logging planned for TA0519, as there is no logging entry in its long-term calendar! It is unclear whether this was said to assuage the intention of removing all the timber in 20 years time or if the remaining trees would indeed be allowed to grow towards a hydrologically recovering forest.

It is understood that this is a new harvesting approach for BCTS and that this would be an experiment; there would be follow-up monitoring of the growth rate of the remaining trees.

For such a contentious proposed cut block, we were exceedingly surprised at the narrow scope of proposed monitoring - it only reflected interest in the production of future timber. Numerous letters from our organizations and from the Town of Gibsons have detailed how important this area is to our community with respect to water both in recharging Aquifer 560 and mitigating flood damage downstream.

The proposed monitoring leads us to believe that your organization is not serious about measuring the impact of a partial harvest system on these valued community concerns, for the simple reason that BCTS has no data. Data has not been collected to date and there are no serious plans to collect data after logging, as evidenced by the lack of any substantive monitoring plans. Waterflow monitoring was not even mentioned!.

If BCTS was serious about studying the impact of a 33% partial harvest, the waterflow of creeks both upstream and downstream and water levels in the Capilano and Pre-Vashon aquifers would be measured. In addition data on the biodiversity (fungi, plants, small and larger animals), windfall, tree growth by LIDAR would be collected. Critically, to provide robust evidence, data would need to be collected at least 3-5 years before harvesting and then monitored for at least 10 years afterwards.

The hydrology section of the 2023 report by Polar Geoscience Ltd. referenced above which is being used as the basis of your logging decisions, is limited to the surface hydrology and does not examine the hydrogeology of the area. This report therefore, does not, and cannot, make any statements about possible adverse impacts of logging activity on the health of the underlying Aquifer 560 and Capilano Aquifer which our community depends on for drinking water.

We believe that your plans to log in the heart of Aquifer 560 could have a significant potential to damage our Aquifers. Climate change has and continues to threaten our water supply and our drinking water recharge area - an area that is much too precious a community asset in which to perform a poorly thought out logging experiment.

A way forward, as we indicated at the community meeting, would be for all stakeholders to commit to implementing a **Water Sustainability Plan** under the direction of the Ministry of Water, Lands and Natural Resources, of the aquifer recharge areas, while a logging moratorium in our watershed is in place. We restate our offer for BCTS to join

us at the planning table. To this end we have approached the government and append our request for your information.

\*\*\*\* To Be decided\*\*\*\*

ECA members discussed the BCTS logging plans of TA0519 at its monthly meeting on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2025 and have unanimously supported the following motion: "Members of the ECA strongly oppose logging of TA0519. Logging in this area may have a significant negative impact on our drinking water supply and may increase the risk of flooding during extreme weather events." (Can we have a resolution here that ECA votes on at the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting so we can put that in with a specific date?)

\*\*\*\* To Be Decided\*\*\*\*\*

It simply does not make sense, in this time of climate change, for any government agency to consider logging in a watershed relied upon by downstream communities of thousands of residents. The relatively small economic benefits are not worth the risk to our local community.

Rod Moorcroft  
Chair, Elphinstone Community Association

cc:

Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forest  
Kelley Greene, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness  
Tamara Davidson, Minister of Environment and Parks  
Xxxxxx, Squamish Nation Council  
SCRD board of directors  
Town of Gibsons Council  
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association  
Roberts Creek Community Association