

Feb 9, 2014

Dear Minister Thomson, Deputy Minister Sheldon, and District Manager Anderson,  
Via e-mail

We believe logging of up to one quarter of Gambier Island will be a mistake and we would like to review the studies that have been conducted to justify this decision. We also ask for consultation with stakeholders prior to the advertising of these woodlots.

The Future of Howe Sound Society is a non-profit organization committed to conservation and stewardship of Howe Sound for current and future generations. Our mission is to encourage the development of an overall comprehensive management plan for Howe Sound that recognizes and protects the social, economic and cultural value of this natural and beautiful environment.

Our purpose is to encourage, facilitate and serve as a liaison for community participation in developing a comprehensive management plan for the Howe Sound region involving local communities, First Nations, local, regional, provincial and federal governments and other interested parties. Engagement and consultation with stakeholders around Howe Sound region is important and we are asking for consultation prior to these woodlots on Gambier being advertised for logging.

Eleven local governments of the Howe Sound Community Forum who signed the Principles for Cooperation are seeking on overall plan for Howe Sound. There are multiple projects currently being proposed and logging currently underway and we believe the cumulative impacts of all this activity in one area of Howe Sound needs to be considered.

As you know, the southern part of Howe Sound is not under a land and resource management plan. The stakeholders of the region have not had input to the best use of this land. The size and location of the area to be logged on Gambier Island, and the location of the log dump raises many concerns for the people of Gambier Island as well as many others who would be impacted. Much has changed in Howe Sound since the area was last logged. Recreation, tourism, and the commercial filming activity has grown significantly. Many movies and commercials (the current Bell ad for the Olympics) are filmed in Howe Sound with Gambier Island in the background.

This part of Gambier Island is highly visible from the Pacific Crest Trail, the Lions Trail, the top of Cypress Mountain ski area, the Sea to Sky Highway, areas that bring thousands of tourists to the region each year.

There are several large scale industrial projects being proposed for Howe Sound. Losing more trees at a time of increased industrial development in the same area is a concern for air quality and greenhouse gas reduction targets. Across from Gambier in the McNab Valley, logging operations are currently underway. Has the impact of the total loss of trees in Howe Sound been considered, both from a visual and an air quality perspective? What coordination and planning takes place between the three forestry districts that have jurisdiction over Howe Sound?

Dumping of logs and staging transportation from Douglas Bay will conflict with the use of this bay by residents as well as the new marine trail.

We hope the Ministry will act in good faith and engage in consultation with the people of the region before moving forward with advertising these woodlots.

Please advise how we can review the studies and assessments conducted for these woodlots.

Thank you for your consideration.

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*Committed to the stewardship and conservation of Howe Sound for current and future generations.*