



## Industry needs tree-farm changes

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Dear Editor:

It has become fashionable once again for some ill-informed critics and special-interest groups to start kicking at the coastal forest industry. Their timing couldn't be worse.

These groups forget that the industry has faced 20 years of continuous change in forest policy, imposed by successive governments, which fundamentally changed the way companies conducted business. Among these dramatic changes were thousands of hectares of land withdrawn for parks, tenure takebacks, increased stumpage and stringent forest practices legislation. Through it all, the coastal industry has found innovative ways to adapt.

Now with an inflated Canadian dollar and a collapse of our major markets in the U.S. and Japan, things are even tougher.

The latest change that some critics are opposing concerns private land the provincial government has allowed some companies to withdraw from their tree farm licences. These lands represent a very small percentage of the companies' holdings and give them the flexibility they need to sell off parcels for a higher and better use while sustaining forestry operations. These are privately owned lands, not Crown forest, and we are talking about land that most critics and environmentalists don't want logged anyway. It doesn't make sense to prevent a company from making changes that will sustain its economic viability, retain jobs and support rural communities.

If successful, the results of these critic's ill informed efforts will be more mill closures, fewer jobs and economic ruin in many rural communities.

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