



PRESS RELEASE

Reduced working forest, not log exports is killing forestry jobs

May 2, 2017, Vancouver – It’s election time and as if on cue that old populist punching bag issue, BC’s log exports, has been pulled out to rally the masses. Unfortunately, many of the statements being made about log exports and jobs are misinformed.

“While the forest industry may have lost 30,000 jobs in the last 15 years, it is definitely not because of log exports,” explained David Elstone, TLA Executive Director. “It is because the working forest has shrunk dramatically in that time.”

In the Interior, it is well known that the mountain pine beetle ravaged our forests and there is now a timber supply shortage. There aren’t enough full grown trees to support the Interior mills and so mills have and will continue to close. We’ve know this was coming for 20 years. It’s not a surprise.

On the coast, the size of the working forest has fallen by a third—from a high of 24.5 million cubic metres in 1985 to 16.5 million cubic metres today. This 33% reduction took place slowly as British Columbians worked to find a balance between environmental protection and a healthy forest industry. If you reduce the working forest by a third, it’s going to impact jobs.

“Simply put, it is wrong to say that mills have closed wholly as a result of log exports. Our sawmills and pulp mills have closed because we’re harvesting a lot less trees than we used to,” said Elstone. “Any industry is affected by many variables. Markets and lack of certainty on the land base have also affected BC’s forest industry.”

For more information about log exports and their impacts, read our document, [“Log Exports: Your Questions Answered.”](#)

The TLA (Truck Loggers Association) represents 480 independent forest contractors and their suppliers operating on the coast of British Columbia. Our membership supports thousands of workers and, along with other independent contractors, accounts for close to 90 per cent of the trees harvested on the coast. The TLA promotes a thriving, sustainable coastal forest industry in BC.

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