



ADVOCACY RAMPING UP FOR WILDFIRES, SUSTAINABILITY AND REVITALIZATION

One of the most significant events to have impacted the forest industry this past summer is the devastation of wildfires across the province.

Following the worst wildfire season on record in BC, we have once again addressed our concerns with government about the lack of utilizing contractors to assist with fighting fires. After hearing from several contractors about what they were observing regarding forest fire fighting, we reached out to the TLA membership to solicit broader feedback from across the province. We will share this information with BC Wildfire Service later this year when we anticipate meeting to discuss a strategy for 2019. As a reminder, please stay safe when returning to harvest burnt stands.

Another equally important event to have occurred over the summer, and possibly the past decade, was the highly-anticipated initiation of the facilitation process to review the resulting recommendations from the Contractor Sustainability Review (CSR).

In mid-August, members of the TLA executive, advisors, and executive director independently met with the facilitator, Dan Miller, a former cabinet minister and Premier who was hired to oversee the review and implementation of the CSR's recommendations.

Although behind schedule, it was evident at this meeting that the government is earnest in its desire to assist the forest industry as a whole in resolving the current imbalance between contractors and licensees in the best interest of public land and the province.

This is an opportunity for contractors to collectively change the status quo by improving business practices through fair negotiations, being well informed about related data, not undercutting the market and knowing when to say no.

At time of writing, another meeting was scheduled in mid-September to meet with Miller again along with

leadership from COFI, ILMA, ILA and NWLA to begin the process of working together to identify mutually agreeable solutions and resolve differences.

In June, and of almost equal importance, the government also introduced the Coast Revitalization Initiative, inviting industry to submit analysis and proposed solutions for job creation, lumber production and fibre supply, log exports, First Nations participation, and waste (read more on page 28). In August, the TLA submitted a 20-page document with recommended solutions and supporting data that the TLA has proposed several times to government over the years. At time of writing, a follow-up meeting with government and industry representatives was also scheduled for mid-September to review all proposals and begin developing solutions.

Not only do we advocate government about policies that affect the industry, we are also concerned about policy that will impact contractors' businesses directly. Recent changes to the Medical Service Premiums (MSP) and introduction of the Employer Health Tax (EHT) in 2019 will undoubtedly cause financial harm to TLA member businesses. The 1.9 per cent EHT tax is equivalent to many of the TLA's members' net profit margins; meaning it is entirely possible that our members may be working without profit.

As a business owner, this is of great concern to me. How can we continue to serve our customers, support our communities and keep our employees if there is no incentive to stay in business?

To date, we have sent two letters to government regarding these issues asking they rethink this tax given the financial impact it will cause our membership.

These timely and relevant topics are addressed at the TLA's regular networking events and annual convention, where we provide opportunities for members to hear from guest speakers and industry experts, as well as interact with other

contractors to discuss issues and learn from one another. I encourage you to join us.

The TLA also proudly sponsors many Logger Sports events throughout the province each summer in support of the industry. It was great to see such a large turnout of loggers and their families this year, and I'd like to congratulate all the participants and winners.

Thanks to the 240 golfers who joined us for our 22nd annual golf tournament held at Westin Bear Mountain in Victoria to accommodate the overwhelming demand from our members to participate. Congratulations to tournament winner, Catalys Lubricants; best-dressed team, Cokely Wire Rope; and all other contest winners.

As we ramp up for another busy year, I'm looking forward to all that we are about to accomplish powered by a dynamic, now fully-staffed team in the TLA office including Stacie Dixon, director of membership; Lisa Cruthers, events manager who oversees the convention and tradeshow, golf tournament, and networking events; Jennifer Kramer, director of communications who oversees media relations, social media, government communications, and is the editor of *Truck LoggerBC* magazine; and Shannon Hudson, executive assistant, a new role supporting the executive director and board of directors. Special thanks to Kathie Madden for temporarily coming out of retirement to assist with planning events. I encourage you to reach out to the staff, myself or Executive Director, David Elstone anytime to address your issues or concerns.▲

Mike Richardson, President, TLA

Tel: 250.203.2649

Email: mike@tsibass.ca