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Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

PROTECTION ASSURED; CENTRAL COAST PLANNING CONTINUES

VICTORIA – Government has extended orders-in-council that prevent commercial forestry in 20 candidate protection areas and 17 option areas along the central coast.

“It is important that we protect these areas from harvesting activities until the appropriate scientific information has been gathered and the land-use-planning process is completed,” Stan Hagen, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, said today. “We have had a high degree of support and co-operation from all participants in the process – including the forest industry, which is directly impacted.”

The order-in-council, under Part 13 of the Forest Act, has been extended and will expire June 30, 2004, allowing enough time for the land-use planning process to be completed and implementation to begin.

“We support the decision of the minister, which provides more flexibility for government-to-government discussions,” said Dallas Smith, Kwakiutl District Council, Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council and Tlowitsis Nation co-chair.

The Ministry of Forests will continue to use this designation to suspend forest-development activities in these areas. As well, the chief forester’s decision will continue to temporarily reduce the allowable annual cut for the associated timber-supply areas and tree-farm licences. Outside the designated area, timber harvesting continues in the Central Coast area.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines will leave the current no-staking reserve in place for the candidate protection areas.

“This extension supports our New Era commitment to adopt a scientifically based, principled approach to environmental management that ensures sustainability, accountability and responsibility, and is key to the innovative approach to community-based resource management along the Central Coast,” Hagen said.

Planning is ongoing, with the involvement of First Nations, government, forest companies and other resource sectors, conservation groups and community representatives. The planning area covers about 4.8 million hectares along the west coast of British Columbia.

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