



March 6, 2007

Dear Editor:

If you heard NDP Forest Critic Bob Simpson in the legislature the other day, you might be forgiven for thinking that the NDP has made a startling reversal of some of the party's major policies.

Simpson made such a spirited attack on B.C. forests that he seemed ready to demand the government bring back clear-cut logging, take back forest parkland and get those nasty trees right off every hectare of B.C. soil. Trees, it seems to Simpson, are NOT good for the environment.

Despite evidence to the contrary, Simpson believes that B.C.'s forests actually contribute to global warming and that the government should not waste money on reforestation.

Here are Simpson's own words, taken from Hansard: "There is no guarantee that each tree planted will live to maturity and take up all of the greenhouse gas equivalents that it was supposed to offset. As B.C. forests show, our carbon sinks may become carbon contributors. Our plantations, as climate change advances, may not be healthy. And then each tree planted may not offset the one tonne of carbon it's supposed to offset."

In fact, Simpson goes even further, suggesting "it is foolhardy to depend on our forests as the centerpiece of any climate change strategy".

But the 'inconvenient truth' is that no one but Simpson is making that suggestion. The provincial government says that carbon offsets, in terms of growing our forests, are simply one of many tools that would be used to help meet its rather aggressive targets. They are certainly not the centerpiece of a climate change strategy. Simpson is only telling part of the story to try to score political points.

Just ask Al Gore. In the sleeve of his documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, the former U.S. Vice President and outspoken environmentalist, cites planting a tree as one of the top 10 things to do to stop global warming.

Renewable forests provide sustainable, environmentally-friendly forest products and housing that is healthy for human beings.

The forest industry is constantly measuring the environmental impact of producing building materials throughout their lifespan. Wood is far superior to steel, concrete, plastic or fiberglass from an environmental perspective.

Any credible climate change plan (like the Liberal plan) will include emissions standards, consumption reductions, clean energy production, lifestyle changes, alternative green transportation, and improved and adaptive forest

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management.

The forest industry will play an important role by advancing science-based management and reforestation. Industry will also continue the production and evolution of the most environmentally sustainable and healthy building material on the planet – wood.

Bob Simpson knows this because he used to work in the forest industry. But I guess NDP politics has become more important to him. Some things don't change after all.

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*Coast Forest Products Association represents forest and paper companies in coastal British Columbia engaged in the harvesting and manufacturing of forest products, and pulp and paper products. Together these companies manufacture 95% of the lumber on the coast, 70% of the pulp and paper, and are responsible for 60% of the total harvest. Coast Forest works to ensure that the five coastal species and their product lines have fair access to the global marketplace.*

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