



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

Date: May 14, 2022

Subject: **Advocacy for Legislation to Protect Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Health**

Purpose

To request Port Moody advocate to the BC Government to take a “develop and implement legislation to protect biological diversity and ecological health.

Recommendation

THAT the following resolution regarding Advocacy for Legislation to Protect Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Health be endorsed by the City of Port Moody Council

AND THAT staff be directed to forward copies to the Premier of British Columbia, the Ministers of Environment, Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources, and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Convention as recommended by the report dated May 14th, 2022 from Councillor Amy Lubik:

WHEREAS a healthy environment is essential for the wellbeing of residents, local communities and local economies, and the cumulative impacts of inadequate provincial environmental regulations impose costs and risks on local communities, including risks associated with climate change, drinking water supply, wildfire hazard, flooding, and security of municipal infrastructure, and may undermine local government planning;

AND WHEREAS in order to protect and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health, and advance the objective of reconciliation, the provincial government has committed to fully implement the recommendations of the 2020 Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR), including recommendation 2: “Declare conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity of British Columbia’s forests as an overarching priority and enact legislation that legally establishes this priority for all sectors”;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the UBCM calls on the Province of British Columbia to work with Indigenous leadership to, in a timely way, develop and the process and timelines through which they will develop new legislation to protect and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and with the involvement of

local governments, civil society groups, Indigenous and western scientific experts, and the concerned public.

Background

In April 2022, Port Moody councillors received a letter from West Coast Environmental Law with a request to support a campaign to protect ecosystems, particularly old growth forests.

Dear Local Government Partner:

I am writing to encourage you to join the growing movement for a new provincial law to protect and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health.

One of the key recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) –which the Province of BC has promised to implement in full –is that BC enact a new law to establish ecosystem health and biodiversity as an “overarching priority” across all sectors, including the alignment of “all other land-related provincial legislation, management systems and processes to this overarching goal” (OGSR Recommendation 2). Since then, a growing number of local governments have expressed support for implementation of the OGSR report, and stronger provincial environmental legislation.

A year and- a half after the release of the 2020 OGSR report, the Province has failed to take any concrete action to implement Recommendation 2.

The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs and other Indigenous groups have called for immediate and sustained action to ensure that the OGSR’s recommendations are carried out, and in particular, have adopted the attached resolution calling on the Province of BC to move forward enactment of new, overarching legislation for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem health.

We are now reaching out to you and other environmentally-minded council members and regional directors, asking you to consider bringing a Notice of Motion to your Council or Board advocating to the Province to adopt a new law for biodiversity and ecosystem health.

We have drafted the attached Notice of Motion and Advocacy Resolution to assist you, and we are happy to meet with you by phone or Zoom to discuss further. We are also happy to present as a Delegation to your Council or Board if you think it would help secure majority support for the Resolution.

Thank you for considering taking action on this important issue. We look forward to hearing from you. I encourage to contact my colleague Whitney Vicente if you have any questions.

*Sincerely,
Jessica Clogg
Executive Director and Senior Counsel*

This letter provides an opportunity to support many initiatives that we hold dear, such as climate resilience, the protection of old growth forests, and reconciliation.

Discussion

Port Moody council has been a leader in policy and advocacy regarding climate and environmental resilience and acknowledges that we are not just in a climate crisis but an ecological one as well. The importance of biodiversity is outlined a 2019 commentary article “Biodiversity loss—more than an environmental emergency” in the Lancet Journal (**attachment**

1). To this end we have authored reports calling on the province to safeguard old growth forests and imploring the Province to declare a Climate Emergency, with meaningful targets and actions. We have also collaborated with West Coast Environmental Law previously on their Climate Justice in our Hands campaign.

Residents of Port Moody are passionate about protection of the natural environment and support measures to safeguard and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health. This is demonstrated by the habitat restoration and preservation work of many local community groups working on educating residents about trees and ecosystems and was key in the success of the Tri-Cities Natural Challenge.

Port Moody residents and council are also passionate about reconciliation and acknowledging and uplifting Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and embedding the UN Declarations of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into policy. The above resolution is meant to echo and amplify a similar call from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (**attachment 2**), as well as protecting BC's Ecosystem health and biodiversity, which is integral to the health of our residents.

Other Option

THAT the report regarding Advocacy for Legislation to Protect Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Health

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

There are no communication and civic engagement initiatives.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

- Courage to lead and embrace new ideas
- Climate justice and resilience
- Ecosystem protection
- The health and wellness needs of residents

Attachments

- 1) Advocacy for Legislation to Protect Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Health
- 2) 2021 Sept AGA Final Resolutions Combined