

January 27, 2010

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041
Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC
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Dear Premier Campbell:

The forecast warming of the Earth's climate threatens life as we know it for all species – including humans - in British Columbia and across the planet. The science paints a bleak picture: a biodiversity crisis, declining species and increasing habitat fragmentation and loss, made worse by rapid climate change. This damage to nature's web of life has dangerous implications for human civilization.

Many basic human needs are directly dependent on the goods and services nature provides; e.g., climate regulation through carbon capture and storage, clean water, air and water purification, waste treatment, nutrient cycling in soils, and food from plants and animals through a marvel of complex genetic and ecological interactions. The economy and communities also depend upon the sustainable use of renewable natural resources, such as forests and rangelands and fish, and benefit directly and indirectly from natural beauty, serenity and recreational and tourism opportunities.

The continued and potentially dire impacts of climate change can only be avoided or forestalled if we act now to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to slow the rate of ecosystem degradation. The conservation of natural ecosystems has clear and immediate benefits for adapting to and mitigating climate change -- benefits that should be accorded full value and understood as integral components of a comprehensive climate action strategy for British Columbia. Large-scale, interconnected forests and other ecosystems can help conserve BC's rich biodiversity, with the added benefit of storage and sequestration of carbon by our trees, other plants, and soils. A conservation network of parks, protected areas, and other land use designations that prioritize biodiversity and/or other ecosystem values, needs to be complemented by supportive, nurturing surrounding lands in which human uses have a light footprint, and carbon stewardship and biodiversity conservation are maximised.

Given the urgency of climate change, the implications to British Columbia's biodiversity, economy and society, we the undersigned urge your government to move promptly to integrate nature conservation into the provincial climate action strategy.

Sincerely,

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This letter was organized by the Working Group on Biodiversity, Forests and Climate - an alliance of ENGOs, including: BC Spaces for Nature, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – BC Chapter, David Suzuki Foundation, ForestEthics, The Land Trust Alliance of BC, West Coast Environmental Law, and Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative.

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