



Reference: 253112

January 21, 2020

Dave Clarke

[Dave.Clarke@bcfpb.ca](mailto:Dave.Clarke@bcfpb.ca)

Dear Dave Clarke:

I have been asked to provide a response to the email sent by Karen Wylie, Sustainable Forest Management Analyst, on January 7, 2020. The email was addressed to Chris Hodder and Laurence Bowdige of BC Wildfire Service regarding the recommendation made by the Forest Practices Board in accordance with section 131 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

As a result of the fire seasons experienced in BC in 2017 and 2018, the BC Wildfire Service is undertaking a review of fire and fuel hazard assessment and abatement legislation, policy and guidance. This work began in late 2018 with procuring contractor services to gather hazard abatement and fire behaviour data from throughout BC where wildfires have interacted with industrial activities (harvesting).

The data compiled during this review will help shape future policy and guidance updates related to fuel hazard assessment and abatement (FHAA) activities. It will ensure that potential fuel hazards do not increase fire behaviour or have a negative impact on fire suppression efforts. This work is expected to continue through 2020 and into 2021.

In response to a deadline by which hazards must be abated, it is a requirement that hazard abatement occurs within a certain and reasonable time frame to reduce the hazard. The time line to abate depends on the location of the hazard i.e. within a certain distance from a community. The deadline to abate can vary anywhere from 6 months to 30 months, depending on the location.

There are several important factors taken into consideration when determining and meeting these requirements. It's a balance of managing/mitigating wildfire risk while taking into consideration other social and economic opportunities and impacts.

- Allowing sufficient time for any potential secondary fibre use – fibre utilization
- Allowing enough time for fuels to dry out

Dave Clarke

- Adequate time and opportunities to abate based on seasonal and local conditions
- Location on the landscape i.e. within the Wildland Urban Interface
- Wildfire threat and risk

A second phase of *Forest Range Practices Act* (FRPA) changes is proposed for introduction in 2020. These will be followed by a set of regulatory amendments. The proposed legislation responds to the profound challenges BC's forest sector has experienced in the last decade and creates a legislative framework to address current and foreseeable pressures.

A key goal of these changes is to equip land managers with tools to establish resilient forest and range lands, to successfully face challenges such as wildfire and climate change. Amendments being proposed will establish a wildfire objective under FRPA and enable new practices within the wildland urban interface suited to address the threat of catastrophic wildfires. Furthermore, government will be provided with more oversight and ability to guide the establishment of resilient ecosystems.

In addition to making amendments to FRPA, BCWS is intending to review key wildfire policies and legislation, including the *Wildfire Act* and the Wildfire Regulation that further supports all the pillars of emergency management.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write and bring this recommendation to our attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Rob Schweitzer', written in a cursive style.

Rob Schweitzer  
A/ Director, Wildfire Operations  
BC Wildfire Service

Pc: Jamie Jeffreys, Director, Strategic Engagement  
Chris Hodder, Manager, Wildfire Prevention  
Jody Lucius, Superintendent, Communications and Engagement  
Laurence Bowdige, Superintendent, Wildfire Recovery  
Rory Colwell, Superintendent, Fuels Management



**Forest  
Practices  
Board**

File: 97250-20/18061

February 5, 2020

Rob Schweitzer  
A/Director, Wildfire Operations  
BC Wildfire Service  
P.O. Box 9502 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9C1

Dear Rob Schweitzer:

**Re: Response to the Board's recommendation: Complaint 18061 - Fire Hazard Abatement and the Shovel Lake Wildfire.**

Thank you for your letter of January 21, 2020, responding to our recommendation in this report.

The Board recommended "Government review the appropriateness of the Defined Hazard Assessment and Abatement Strategy with particular attention to the deadline by which hazards must be abated, and the amount of fuel that may be left on cutblocks without requiring abatement."

I understand that the BC Wildfire Service has begun a review of fire and fuel hazard assessment and abatement legislation, policy and guidance, and that this work is expected to continue until 2021. The review will inform an evaluation of the current fuel hazard assessment and abatement process.

In addition, planned amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* include the establishment of a wildfire objective which will enable new practices in the interface to address the wildfire threat. Government will also be provided with more oversight.

Although the review and amendments will take some time to complete, it is clear that BC Wildfire Service is on track to fulfill the Board's recommendation.

I understand that Chris Hodder, Manager of Wildfire Prevention has offered to meet to provide additional details. We would be interested in learning more about the review and the creation of a wildfire objective.

Rob Schweitzer  
February 5, 2020  
Page 2

Thank you for your response to the Board's recommendation. We accept your response and now consider this file closed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Kriese', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kevin Kriese  
Chair

cc: Chris Hodder, Manager of Fire Prevention