



Association of Professional
Biologists of British Columbia

Hon. Pat Bell
Minister of Forests and Range
Minister Responsible for the
Integrated Land Management Bureau

P.O. Box 9049
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

RE: Staffing cuts and impacts to critical ecological research and resources

Dear Minister Bell,

The Association of Professional Biologists of BC (APB) is concerned that the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system, an invaluable tool utilized by biology professionals on a daily basis is at risk of becoming obsolete due to recent staffing reductions.

As the initial coarse filter step in habitat identification it is critical to any professional work involving plants, wildlife, fish, and ecosystems, particularly Species At Risk. Habitat classification is necessary to meet legislated requirements for most resource development activities, including timber harvest, mining, and oil and gas.

Recent cutbacks have resulted in the elimination of the Forest Sciences Research Ecologist position within the Ministry of Forests in Kamloops: this has effectively terminated the nearly complete updated BEC version for the entire Southern Interior Forest Region.

In addition to the Kamloops example, we understand that other similar positions, such as those in Prince George and Smithers were also recently eliminated. The APB recognizes the difficult fiscal decisions your Ministry is faced with. However we believe that maintaining the Province's ecological research capacity, the end products of which are used in daily resource management, is a valuable long-term investment in resource sustainability.

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"Promoting and assisting professional practitioners of applied biology since 1980"

We therefore request your Ministry's serious reconsideration of the eliminated ecology positions. Their loss will severely impact the Province's capability to sustainably manage BC's natural resources. We also feel that by investing in necessary tools and resources like the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification system, your government can continue to demonstrate its commitment to support BC registered qualified environmental professionals as leaders in professional practice.

The Association of Professional Biologists of BC is the voice for Biology Professionals and their role in the application of science to the management of BC's natural resources.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your consideration of our request on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Pamela Zevit RPBio, President
Association of Professional Biologists of BC

cc to:

Hon. Barry Penner
Minister of Environment & Stewardship

Hon. Steve Thomson
Minister of Agriculture & Lands

Hon. Bill Bennett
Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources