



NEWS RELEASE

HUGE VICTORY FOR CANADA'S RAINFOREST

Environmentalists Vow to Suspend Markets Campaign Targeting Coastal Logging Companies

Vancouver. Conservationists won a major victory today as government endorsed an historic agreement between environmentalists, First Nations, logging companies and communities on British Columbia's Central and North coast rainforests, known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

"This is a real turning point for the future of BC's rainforests," said Merran Smith, Senior Forest Campaigner, Sierra Club of BC. "It means that the ancient rainforests that have stood in over forty coastal valleys for the last thousand years, will be standing for the next thousand."

Tzeporah Berman, a Canadian working with the US-based conservation group ForestEthics, is also pleased with this initial step. "As a result of this agreement we will suspend our campaign targeting the major coastal logging companies. We look forward to working with all everyone over the next two years to achieve final resolution."

"This is a victory for British Columbians and concerned customers around the world who have called for the Great Bear Rainforest to receive protection," said Catherine Stewart, Greenpeace Forest campaigner. "It's a significant first step that BC logging companies are finally listening to customers in Europe, Japan and the US, and are now working to craft solutions that satisfy global concerns and the needs of coastal communities."

Ian McAllister, of the Bella Bella-based Raincoast Conservation Society, said "there has been over a decade of campaigning for the protection of the Great Bear Rainforest and today we are witnessing the first step towards this important goal. British Columbian's should be proud."

"We are very encouraged that this announcement includes protected areas for the spirit bear," said Matt Price of NRDC. "We will continue to work with First Nations and industry to ensure the future health of this rare and magnificent animal."

The consensus agreement package contains a combination of nearly 700,000 hectares of protected areas and 900,000 hectares of deferred areas, plus a new ecosystem-based approach to planning, an independent information body of scientists and economists, government to government protocols and a "managing change plan" for economic diversification.

Over the past four years, there has been mounting pressure in the global marketplace for this change. In response to high-profile consumer and environmental campaigns, customers in the United States, Europe and Japan, who collectively purchase over \$2 billion worth of BC forest products each year have made strong statements in support of conservation and ecologically responsible logging. They include Home Depot, Lowes, IKEA, Misubishi Corporation of Japan, and investors such as the Royal Bank of Canada and Ethical Funds Incorporated, who sold their shares in some targeted coastal logging companies.

The unprecedented agreement was developed after nearly four years of discussions among conservation groups (including Sierra Club of BC, Greenpeace, ForestEthics, Rainforest Action Network, and others), companies (including Weyerhaeuser, Western Forest Products, Interfor, Norske Skog and Canfor), labour, communities and First Nations.

The coastal region includes dozens of pristine valleys and lush ancient temperate rainforests, and is home to some of the most biologically unique and rich mix of plants and animals on the planet including grizzlies, salmon, Kermode bears, wolves and giant trees.

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For an on-line **map of the region**, please visit www.sierraclub.ca/bc.

For **on-line images** of key protected valleys visit www.raincoast.org/ftp.

For **beta-tapes** with footage of the region, please contact Ian McAllister at the number listed above.