











# BC Government Old-growth Report Card

Date: March 11th, 2021

Premier: John Horgan

Last fall, Premier John Horgan made a big promise. He pledged his government would implement the old-growth panel recommendations ‘in their totality.’ The recommendations, which the government received in April and published September 11th, follow a three-year timeline (including short-term actions) and call for a paradigm shift to make ecological integrity and biodiversity the top priority. This report card grades how the government is doing six months after committing to this paradigm shift.

SUBJECT	PROGRESS	GRADE
<b>Immediate action for at-risk forest (deferrals within 6 months)</b>		
<p>The old-growth panel calls for immediate interim protection of the most at-risk old-growth to prevent the loss of rare ecosystems. To date, government’s deferrals only include about about 3,800 hectares, or less than 1% of the most at-risk old-growth. Logging continues in much of the remainder, and critical old-growth stands are being lost forever. <b>To improve this grade, the BC government must immediately defer logging of all at risk old-growth in the province.</b></p>		
<b>Three-year workplan with milestone dates</b>		
<p>The old-growth panel recommendations are embedded in a three-year framework with six month steps, starting with immediate action for at-risk forests and engagement with Indigenous governments, followed by a transition plan, a new framework prioritizing ecological integrity and alternatives to clearcutting. To date, the BC government has not tied its implementation promise to a work plan with milestone dates. <b>Without such a step, the BC government remains unaccountable, meaning First Nations and forestry-dependent communities cannot count on support through the transition.</b></p>		
<b>Funding for implementation, First Nations and forestry transition</b>		
<p>Significant provincial funding to support economic alternatives for First Nations and to enable a transition in the forest sector is fundamental to the successful implementation of the old-growth panel recommendations. This includes immediate funding to support First Nations seeking temporary economic relief while logging deferrals are put in place, as well as support for forestry workers. The BC government has yet to announce any funding commitments whatsoever, jeopardizing the success of many of the panel’s recommendations. <b>To improve this grade, it must immediately allocate funds to meet both short-term and long-term needs to secure Indigenous-led long-term conservation solutions and economic alternatives to old-growth logging.</b></p>		
<b>Change course and prioritize ecosystem integrity and biodiversity</b>		
<p>The old-growth panel’s call for a paradigm shift to prioritize conservation and management of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity across sectors requires an immediate course correction. This requires giving direction to statutory decision-makers like the chief forester and district managers to execute these priorities. <b>As a first step, the BC government must immediately introduce delayed amendments to provincial forestry laws prepared prior to the pandemic.</b></p>		
<b>Transparency and Communication</b>		
<p>The old-growth panel stressed the need to improve transparency and communication about ecosystems and forest management in order to rebuild public trust. Unfortunately, the government’s communication around its response to the report has been inaccurate and misleading. The government has further alienated the public and jeopardized this process from the outset by classifying its initial measure as “353,000 hectares of old-growth protected” when much of this area is not old-growth and much of it is forest that is already protected. <b>To get to a passing grade, government must correct misleading information and quickly share accurate data on how much at-risk old-growth remains unprotected and report on progress without false claims.</b></p>		