



File: 97250-20/17017

November 6, 2019

VIA EMAIL

Dear Participants:

Re: Resolution of Complaint 17017 – Bamfield Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs)

On November 27, 2018, the Forest Practices Board (the Board) received a complaint from a resident of Bamfield, BC. The complainant asserted that harvesting by HFN Forestry Limited Partnership (HFN Forestry) on Somerset Ridge southeast of Bamfield was not consistent with the VQO for the area and that government enforcement was not appropriate.

In 2013, HFN Forestry designed two cutblocks and completed a visual impact assessment that determined the planned cutblocks would meet the visual quality objective of partial retention following harvest. The design included a 100-metre visual screen with a pruning prescription to reduce the risk of blowdown. HFN Forestry started harvesting the cutblocks in September 2015, but a series of windstorms in October 2015 blew down most of the visual screen before HFN Forestry could prune safely.

The complainant was aware of the visual quality requirements and did not think the harvesting met the VQO. The complainant submitted a complaint to Compliance and Enforcement Branch (CEB) of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development in May 2017. Since CEB did not have expertise to evaluate the visual impact of the block, it hired an expert in visual resource management to assess the harvesting. That expert's

assessment showed that, from the significant public viewpoints chosen by HFN Forestry, the harvesting met the VQO, but from six other significant public viewpoints it did not. The expert noted deficiencies, errors, and outdated terminology in the HFN Forestry visual impact assessment.

Section 21 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* requires licensees to follow all strategies in a forest stewardship plan (FSP.) HFN Forestry's FSP requires it to design cutblocks to meet the VQO. CEB found that since HFN Forestry designed the blocks to meet the VQO from the viewpoints it chose, it complied with section 21 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

HFN Forestry and CEB agree that the resulting altered forest landscape did not meet the VQO of partial retention. They committed to attending a local visual resource management training session to be held in spring, 2020 by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. The complainant is satisfied that training is a resolution to the complaint, as it reduces the risk of future cutblocks not meeting a VQO. The complainant is also concerned about public indifference to the visual resource in the region and hoped the training would have a public engagement component that would elevate public awareness. However, the training is technical and not suited to public engagement.

The complainant wanted to find a way to elevate awareness with the public and forest professionals about visual resource management in the Port Alberni area. The Board intends, over the next year, to look for opportunities on Vancouver Island to discuss VQOs with government, professionals, industry and the public. The Board investigated visual quality management in the Port Alberni area and in 2016 published a special investigation about [visual quality on Alberni Inlet](#). Furthermore, the Board has frequently published reports and other materials about visual quality management that are available on our [website](#).

That satisfies the complainant and all parties consider the complaint resolved.

This concludes the Board's involvement in this file. Thank you for your cooperation during the investigation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Glen Pilling at (250) 213-4731.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kriese
Chair

cc: The Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development