



Professional Engineers  
and Geoscientists of BC  
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October 30, 2014

Mr. Tim Ryan, RPF  
Chair  
Forest Practices Board  
PO Box 9905 Stn Prov. Gov't  
Victoria, BC V8X 9R1

Dear Mr. Ryan:

We are writing in response to a request made by the Forest Practices Board (FPB) in its Special Investigation of *Bridge Planning, Design and Construction*, March 2014. In that report, the Board made the following recommendation:

The Board requests that the Joint Practices Board of the Association of BC Forest Professionals and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia advise it of the steps planned or taken to address the professional practice issues identified in this report by October 31, 2014.

In the report, the FPB identified 32 bridges that were deemed either unsafe or had serious safety concerns. The ABCFP and APEGBC take safety issues very seriously and believe that even one unsafe bridge is not acceptable.

As you know, the issue of forest road crossings is complex and there a number of participants who are involved by the time a forest road bridge is constructed and confirmed safe for use. The participants can include: either a forest professional and/or a professional engineer; staff from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; BC Timber Sales, logging contractors; community forest managers; woodlot owners; large tenure holders on the coast or in the Interior; small tenure holders; and First Nations. Solutions to the problem of unsafe forest road bridges do not belong to the professions alone. However, we have done our best to bring together a team of individuals representing a majority of the participants who share a role in the planning, design, construction and use of forest road bridges.

The team we assembled to discuss solutions to the findings in the FPB's report included the following: FLNRO, BCTS, COFI, CFPA, ILMA, Truck Loggers, Community Forests and Federation of BC Woodlot Associations.

We all believe that forest road bridges should be properly planned, designed, constructed, and safe for industrial use and have identified a number of contributing factors that we believe led to the unsafe bridges as well some actions to address the contributing factors.

In terms of actions taken or planned, we have done, or plan to do the following:

1. The Joint Practices Board of the ABCFP and APEGBC have revised and released to our members the APEGBC/ABCFP's *Guidelines for Professional Service in the Forest Sector-Crossings (2014)*.
2. APEGBC and ABCFP coordinated the submission of the document *Framework to Address Contributing Factors to Substandard Bridge – Building Practices.* This was prepared in response to Minister Thomson's request that the two professional associations and relevant forestry associations present an action plan within 60 days of the release of the FPB report.
3. All industry associations in attendance at the meetings organized by APEGBC and the ABCFP where the FPB report was discussed have brought the report to their member's attention. We are also aware of a number of large tenure holders who are carrying out reviews of their procedures to ensure that safe bridges are constructed and they are reviewing their current bridges for safety issues.
4. Both of our organizations have referred the relevant files received from the FPB on the bridges in questions for investigation through the regular complaint process as outlined in the respective Acts.
5. The ABCFP's CEO, Sharon Glover has written a column in the September/October issue of the profession's magazine the *BC Forest Professional* on key learnings from the FPB investigation. APEGBC's President, Mike Bapty, P.Eng., discussed the FPB's report in his President's Viewpoint editorial in the March/April 2014 issue of APEGBC's professional journal *Innovation*. In addition, there was an article reviewing specific details in FPB report published in the March/April issue of *Innovation*.
6. The ABCFP has requested its members vote on a bylaw which would connect a positive obligation to ensure professional practice adheres to the crossings guidance. APEGBC already has the expressed authority to establish, enforce and maintain standards for the practice of APEGBC professionals in the *Engineers and Geoscientists Act*.
7. We are jointly requesting that the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of FLNRO carry out investigations of those licensees which did not adhere to Section 77 (1) (b) of the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation requiring As-Built Drawings for bridges or major culverts. The As-Built/Record Drawings contain professional work and as such require the signature and seal of a forest professional or professional engineer.
8. We are jointly sending enforcement letters to those licensees who did not engage a forest professional or professional engineer to participate in the planning, design, or construction of a forest road bridge.
9. The ABCFP is directing its practice reviews in 2015 to focus on forest road bridges. APEGBC currently requires that 10% of the APEGBC Professionals randomly selected to undergo a practice review in any given year come from those working in the forest sector which includes professional engineers designing forest road bridges. The APEGBC Practice Review Committee is reviewing this to see if APEGBC should increase the number of practice reviews carried out on professional engineers that design forest road bridges.
10. Our organizations are jointly delivering training sessions for our members on the revised *Guidelines for Professional Services in the Forest Sector-Crossing* in November and December of this year.
11. Our Joint Practices Board is creating a "lifecycle of a bridge" document which will identify the various stakeholders involved in the planning, design, construction, ongoing inspections and maintenance of bridges including their respective levels of responsibility.

12. Both of our organizations will be sending an article via FLNRO to small licensees to remind them of their obligations to hire a professional when they are planning, designing, or constructing a forest road bridge.

Our two Associations have worked with a range of stakeholders to ensure the safety of forest road bridges. We are convinced that the above referenced actions will address poor practices that have led to unsafe forest road bridges in BC.

Sincerely,



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