



February 2, 2023

To: Honourable David Eby,
Premier of British Columbia
Via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Re: Ministerial Mandate Letters, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and establishment of a BC Biodiversity Act

Dear Premier Eby,

The purpose of this letter is to offer the support of BC Nature and its members in implementing the directives of your Mandate Letters to Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, and to ensure that BC acts boldly in fulfilling the recommendations of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework produced by COP15.

BC Nature is a federation of 55 naturalist clubs whose 6000 members throughout BC agree with you that the BC's natural health and wealth is essential for a sustainable future, including both non-monetary and non-consumptive benefits. We need to move swiftly to secure that future.

BC is Canada's hotbed of biodiversity. In a world where biodiversity is deteriorating worldwide at rates unprecedented in human history, BC should take a leadership role. BC Nature favours establishing a BC Biodiversity Act to ensure that BC fulfils the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework goal of a shared vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050, based on the ecosystem approach. A BC Biodiversity Act would be easily consistent with the mandate letters you have already issued to ministers.

BC Nature agrees that economic development must be sustainable and consistent with the limits of nature, conserving wild spaces and species, and involve a broad spectrum of our citizens, fully including Indigenous partners. We request the inclusion of ENGOs and community scientists, along with adequate funding for all stakeholders to support meaningful contributions to conservation projects.

While we support the goal of protecting 30% of BC's land base by 2030, we want to highlight that effective protection must include prime areas that foster BC's diverse landscapes, species, and gene pools. Protected areas must also be properly and actively managed to forestall the rapid ecological changes brought upon by invasive species that change the composition of the vegetation, reduce native biodiversity, and destroy ecological integrity.

This protection must be accompanied by adequate reporting requirements, and hold high impact industries accountable for their activities and their consequences. Furthermore, we must look beyond parks and designated protected areas to adequately protect biodiversity. The more municipalities and private land owners actively participate in protecting our

lands, waters, and soils, the sooner we will experience greater benefits of the goods and services that protected areas provide. Perhaps government might offer rewards for those who establish protected areas. We ask that strong education/communication programs promote the ethic of all of BC as a protected area, where all of us do our utmost to foster healthy ecosystems.

The process to select areas for Protected Area status should reach further into the future: to 2050. This plan would initially identify what areas should receive formal Protected Area status by the end of 2050. Then it should identify the logical order, perhaps a somewhat idealistic but concomitantly realistic schedule, that outlines both what areas should be protected by 2030 and then ultimately what the entire 50% Protected Area compendium should consist of at the end of 2050 (Motion 101 of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), 2022). Without such a long-term goal and perspective in place, the locations and types of areas protected by 2030 may jeopardize the appropriate protection of the 50% by 2050.

The Kunming-Montreal Framework states “The direct drivers of change in nature with the largest global impact have been changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasion of alien species”. BC Nature supports our government’s goals and policies that align with the Framework, to:

- Work collaboratively with First Nations, other ministries, and the federal government to protect and enhance B.C.’s biodiversity. We suggest stronger collaborations with Washington and Alaska, as neither the biota nor the invasive alien species that threaten our biodiversity respects political boundaries.
- Protect wild salmon, through the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, Coastal Marine Strategy, and Wild Salmon Strategy, and remove open net pen salmon farms.
- Fund coastal cleanup, as well as waste reduction and green material use initiatives.
- Implement the Old Growth Strategic Review, including the protection of wild spaces and irreplaceable old growth ecosystems, along with threatened biomes such as the rare Coastal Douglas Fir, Interior Cedar - Hemlock, and Bunchgrass biogeoclimatic zones.
- Protect water, watersheds, and our coast, including the Coastal Marine Strategy and addressing ocean acidification.
- Make a model of the Great Bear Rainforest initiatives.
- Protect wildlife and species at risk, including the Together for Wildlife Strategy.
- Address the climate crisis as a leader, developing and implementing a climate-aligned energy framework for B.C., maximizing our province’s production of clean energy, including the CleanBC Roadmap and the Clean Transportation Action Plan, and developing policies and regulations that meet B.C.’s 2030 sectoral and methane targets for the oil and gas sector.

Continue work to create new protected areas and fund, expand, and maintain affordable recreational opportunities, including the responsible growth of eco-tourism.

- Develop a new conservation financing mechanism that includes ENGOs and community scientists to support protection of biodiverse areas.
- Remain flexible as new issues and ideas emerge.

We stress that to achieve these goals you must set measurable targets, monitor results, and report on next steps. Publicizing both these targets and the results simply and widely will yield greater citizen support and prompt complementary action.

We are particularly pleased with the landmark expression of values found in the preamble to the recently released Coastal Marine Strategies Intentions Paper (p2): everything is one, utmost respect, responsibility, taking care of, balance, and giving and receiving. This means recognizing connectivity throughout, including through time. We must strive to make these values not only part of our collective psyche, but also operational, consistent with a goal of the Kunming-Montreal Framework, which states that the integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems must be maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050, and that success requires political will and recognition at the highest level of government, and relies on action and cooperation by all levels of government and by all actors of society. Indeed, we have opportunity not only for reconciliation with nature, but also the democratization of our relationship to the planet.

BC Nature respects your mandate to seek out, foster, and champion good ideas, and your willingness to work across disciplines and old divisions in new ways. We acknowledge the challenge of weaving together the work of ENGOs such as our organization, the various ministries, and local and federal governments, as well as clarifying their responsibilities and making each accountable. BC Nature intends to write to selected Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to express our support, our concerns, and our readiness to participate in solutions consistent with your Mandate Letters and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which states “with the involvement of all of society to halt and reverse biodiversity loss”. We will copy you on those letters. We thank you for listening and your intent to meet goals in the best interests of British Columbians and the environment that supports us, and look forward to your response and working with you and your Ministers.

Yours truly,



Alan E. Burger, PhD
President, BC Nature
(Federation of BC Naturalists)