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Mayor Pamela Goldsmith-Jones

750 17th Street

West Vancouver, BC

January 27, 2010

**Re: Endorsement for a new *Species and Ecosystems Protection Act***

Attn. Mayor and Council;

One year ago, the members of the Species at Risk Working Group- Sierra Club BC, Wilderness Committee, Ecojustice and the David Suzuki Foundation- contacted you about our campaign to ensure protection for British Columbia's species at risk, including strong habitat protection.

We are pleased to share with you that the August 2009 Throne Speech made a welcome announcement of a new Species at Risk Task Force, which will make a policy recommendation in 2010. While this is an important step toward the protection of species at risk in our province, we still need to demonstrate that legislated protection is an important priority for all British Columbians.

We are requesting that City Council take effective action to conserve our irreplaceable natural heritage by passing a motion to endorse the ten principles for a new *Species and Ecosystem Protection Act*.

Already, eight municipalities- Fernie, Coldstream, North Saanich, Mission, Osoyoos, Burnaby, Whistler and Hudson's Hope- have answered our call to endorse the ten principles for a new Species and Ecosystem Protection Act. We would be thrilled to add your municipality to the growing numbers of British Columbians who support a new *Species and Ecosystem Protection Act* and will highlight your efforts on our website [www.lastplaceonearth.ca](http://www.lastplaceonearth.ca)

British Columbia sells itself to the world as "the best place on earth." Unfortunately, it's one of the last places on earth without an endangered species law. Despite having some of the richest wildlife in North America, and more endangered species than any other province or territory, British Columbia is one of only two provinces in Canada without endangered species legislation.

Our vision is a strong Species and Ecosystem Protection Act that protects at-risk species and prevents other species from becoming at risk of extinction or extirpation. Studies of provincial and international species protection laws and best practices show that laws based on the following key principles protect species and ecosystems at risk:

1. Enshrine the principle that healthy ecosystems are essential to healthy human societies and economies;

2. Recognize that biological diversity is essential to healthy ecosystems;
3. Identify, protect and recover at-risk biodiversity throughout the province;
4. Protect and recover biodiversity by protecting habitat; assessment, list and develop recovery strategies for at-risk biodiversity on the basis of sound science;
5. Incorporate global warming into policy, planning and management;
6. Enshrine the precautionary principle, the principle of intergenerational equity, and the polluter-pays principle;
7. Require citizen, community and First Nations participation;
8. Require accountability and transparency;
9. Be funded; and
10. Be enforced.

To protect our incredible wealth of diversity, the BC government needs to enact a strong, stand-alone endangered species and ecosystems law. A strong provincial Species and Ecosystem Protection Act will help BC's biodiversity adapt to global warming by reducing impacts from other activities. Additionally, this law will help maintain the essential ecosystem services (e.g., carbon storage, pollination, nutrient cycling) that nature provides us, helping us maintain, and pass on to future generations, the biological richness and healthy ecosystems we are blessed with today.

Habitat protection is a way to heal ecosystems that are starting to show signs of ill health, such as imminent loss of species, in order to maintain all the irreplaceable benefits that local communities receive, including ecotourism opportunities that access to wild places brings.

We all care deeply about endangered species. Recent polling shows that close to 90% of British Columbians support the creation of a single, effective provincial law to protect species.

Our organizations have joined forces to campaign for species protection legislation for B.C. that includes necessary, strong habitat protection. We hope that, given what is at stake, your municipality will support the above-mentioned 10 principles.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further.

Yours truly,

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On behalf of:

*David Suzuki Foundation  
Ecojustice  
Wilderness Committee*