Minutes and Impressions from the Meeting with John Rustad May 22 2019 1pm

The meeting this afternoon with MLA Rustad was interesting in a good way…In terms of mood it was an easy going conversation amongst long time friends and acquaintances. He is a well educated, experienced and informed ‘Forest Industry Intellect’. As with other meetings of this type on this issue it was a reconnaissance meeting. We were gathering and sharing information. We talked for about an hour and a half.

Amongst the many things we wanted to know was the status of the proposed bill and what MLA Rustad’s position was on it. He had this to say in brief et al and our conversations were thus;

* Morris is going ahead with his bill and it will be introduced next week before summer recess.
* As a private members bill its not likely to go anywhere. But the wheels are turning politically due to its content (more below)…
* At MLA Rustad’s suggestion it has been revised such that FLNRO District Managers can allow Glyphosate applications where alternatives do not exist*. We didn’t get more details here so we don’t know what this means but it is consistent with what MM said in that he was rewriting his initial bill.*
* The reasons for introducing the bill at this time are a bit cloudy but it seems like there is some political strategy at play here by the Liberals trying to run a block on something more by the Greens/NDP next fall or in 2021.
* If liberals were to form government John feels they would not be looking at a ban. He doesn’t agree that it’s the way to accomplish biodiversity goals and Glyphosate is a necessary tool.
* Politically the NDP may jump on this bill or not for their own gains? Depends on the Greens and what Horgan needs to offer them. We will know more in the fall when we hear what comes out of the Gov’t agenda. It may be something they push right away or it may be something they work on and make an election platform item in 2021. More on how IVMA can help here later…
* We informed MLA Rustad of our conversations with the Chief Forester’s office about the policy review on the use of Glyphosate and the potential input we might have there. He knew nothing of this review but he was not surprised. He said we should be prepared to sign an NDA. Which means they will consult with us but we can’t say anything about it to anyone else. The BOD will have to discuss this of course.
* We also discussed at length how IVMA might help. Providing peer reviewed information (website etc discussed), reaching out to and informing legislators et al. He knows who we are and his overall response to this was a bit varied but he made some good points (next bullets) and he is an ally.
* He suggested MM’s base that he is speaking to and supported by, the Trappers Association, Guide Outfitters, BC Wildlife etc, might benefit from hearing the other side of the discussion. He thinks an association like ours should go and speak to these groups and explain the other side of the story.
* He thinks that IVMA could help with developing some elements for the Liberal’s platform during the next election. This would be very high level stuff and more philosophical (read IVM principals) rather than specific (stay out of the emotional debate on herbicides). He is offering to be the conduit for this information and welcomes our input. A brief discussion on time frame was had and he thinks a preliminary input to him for discussion and review by early fall 2019 is good. It needs to be in place just in case NDP makes a move to appease the Greens when the legislators reconvene in the fall.
* We did discuss the benefits of herbicide use and it being amongst the IVM tools. He gets this and thinks it might be part of our high level messaging. This was also discussed in tandem with the conversations around robust legislation which already exists. We were singing to the choir here…He has much more experience in actual forestry than MM.
* We discussed the chronic underfunding of the MoE. IVMA’s feeling that MoE can’t do the oversight work to create public confidence and be able to speak out on that. He gets it and the conversation morphed a bit. He feels that the creation of FLNRO was just the first step in amalgamating all the resource ministries and reducing all the overlapping red tape. The opportunity to do all this heavy lifting was lost with Christy Cambell and we are now here. He agrees MoE needs more funds but education and health matter more these decades.
* John’s view. Mike Morris doesn’t like the Forest Industry and that informs his personal agenda.
* John understands the ‘enviro’s’ agenda to eliminate pesticide use everywhere and has cautioned MM on this (as per our conversations with MM on this as well).

As usual I’ll be sending along a nice thank you email to John with Crawford’s, Rick’s and my own contact information attached. I’ll re-iterate our offer to help with information clarity and our contributions to a ‘resource management platform’ agenda.