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Ravalli County Commissioners

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CC  
Julie Foster  
BCC

January 6, 2012

Ravalli County Commissioners:

Vaagen Bros. Lumber is a lumber manufacturer that is privately owned in Colville, Washington. We also have a sawmill in Usk, Washington and a sawmill in Midway, BC. We specialize in small logs, 12" diameter and less. We prefer Douglas Fir and Larch, Lodgepole Pine and White Fir.

- At our plants, we are also set up to take pulp logs as well. (Pulp is used to make pulp chips.) Each mill has a consumption of 80 truckloads of small saw logs and 20-30 loads of pulp logs per day.
- The Colville mill has had a steady supply of logs but it isn't easy to source. The Usk mill has not had an adequate supply of small logs for several years. Part of the reason is the lumber market has been on a 5 year slide. The other reason is the USFS cut is only 30% of normal historical levels.
- We have been looking for another outside source of logs for Usk the last 3 years. Our need is approximately 30 loads per day. We have in the past sourced logs from Montana, including the Bitterroot Valley. We would like to have a steady affordable source form that area again.
- I know the commissioners would really prefer a sawmill or infrastructure to come to your county. I would like the same to happen. In order for a private company to come in and set up and operation, the USFS would have to sell 50 loads of logs per day at affordable rates to justify a significant investment.
- It would be great if they could supply materials at 50 loads per day, but this is 180 degrees formt he current trend. The lack of available, affordable supply is running infrastructure (mills, pulp mills, loggers, etc.) out of business.

VAAGEN BROS. LUMBER, INC.

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- In light of this, there are vast resources of timber that need to be managed and thinned to slow down the rate of Mountain Pine Beetle infestations which will then lead to massive Montana forest fires.
- I believe the USFS must set up large timber projects that will fill up all the current available infrastructure in Montana.

At the same time, Vaagen Bros. would like to purchase approximately 20 loads of small logs from the Bitterroot areas. We would also like to access and utilize the Montana Rail Link spur line that used to serve Darby to haul logs to our facility (bridge needs repaired). When the USFS commits and demonstrates that they can move a dependable amount of fiber, Vaagen Bros. Lumber would be interested in moving a portable sawmill to your area to treat the vast acreages that deserve treatment.



Duane Vaagen  
President  
Vaagen Bros. Lumber, Inc.

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