

are willing to listen, they are discredited, branded as part of a “fringe element” and accused of conspiring to shoot down helicopters.

So how and when, if ever, is this going to change? And will anything be different the next time someone is harmed by these careless practices? From our perspective, in rural coastal communities where we see more and more of our forest cover destroyed and the soil life poisoned, it’s always more of the same. How do we know, when the Board moves to make changes to rules that govern forestry, that you will take into account the safety of those communities next to forested areas? Are you going to heed the precautionary principle and act to protect our air and water? Or will it be business as usual, where residents are left feeling that we have no rights when pitted against the opportunity for investors on the other side of the world to make greater corporate profits – corporations that are no longer required to pay their share of taxes to those communities in which they operate? The industry has changed over the years – and so should the laws that govern it. In the end, who will be responsible for harm done? It won’t be the timber industry giants – the right to farm and forest act has taken care of that. And many of our state legislators appear to be either too cowardly or too compromised to offer up anything substantial. Will the Board of Forestry take up the challenge and speak for the people who love their forests – and who demand their right to safe air and water? I hope so because someone needs to put the brakes on the use of these dangerous chemicals that are harming our children and all the creatures who depend on our forests. Let’s choose instead to proceed *with* caution instead of throwing it to the wind.

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