



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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Growing a stronger, greener Ontario

Media Release

April 5, 2011

Ontario Government Ignores Northern and Rural Ontario on Bill 151 (Forest Tenure) McGuinty Liberals vote against hearings outside of Toronto

The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) has joined a growing number of organizations and municipalities across northern and rural Ontario who are in opposition to yesterday's unilateral decision by the provincial government to reject holding hearings in Northern and rural Ontario on Bill 151, *An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act*.

Despite recommendations from opposition parties to hold a series of hearings in Northern and rural municipalities, including Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and Pembroke, the provincial government overruled the proposal and voted to limit hearings to Toronto on Monday April 11th and Wednesday April 13th.

"We are very disappointed in yesterday's decision and we urge the Liberal government to reconsider", says Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the OFIA. "Forest tenure is an issue that impacts the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of hard working Ontarians who live and work in municipalities across Northern and rural Ontario" continues Lim, adding "to deny these individuals, and their elected municipal representatives, the opportunity to present their concerns directly to government is disrespectful and unacceptable".

On March 11, 2011 the OFIA submitted a letter to Michael Gravelle, stating that Bill 151 in its current form is flawed and does not respect the government's previous commitment to implement a measured approach to tenure reform.

"Unless significant amendments are made, Bill 151 will create additional uncertainty for the forest sector that will discourage investment, jeopardize employment, and



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unnecessarily restrict economic development. As such, the OFIA is unable to support Bill 151 in its current form” concludes Lim.

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Backgrounder:

“We understand that there is consideration for holding a single hearing, and that it be in Toronto, which is unacceptable. As the proper schedule for hearings is developed, we request that Thunder Bay be included to ensure that a full understanding and discussion of the Bill and its potential impacts occurs where it will have the greatest impact.”

Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce - Letter to the Standing Committee on General Government, March 25, 2011

“Bill 151, Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, has passed second reading at Queen’s Park. The Bill is now being referred to the Standing Committee to General Government. Through this process Council for the Town of Espanola request that public comment be received and considered through hearings held in various Northern Ontario location”

Corporation of the Town of Espanola – Resolution, March 29, 2011

“I am writing this email today with some urgency based on what I heard yesterday from Algoma- Manitoulin MPP Mike Brown who moved a motion to cancel all Northern committee consultations on Bill 151, a bill which would drastically change the way Forest Tenure operates in the province of Ontario. I believe the government has an obligation to hear from Northerners, communities such as Timmins, Espanola, Thunder Bay, Hearst, Cochrane have made clear that they expect the government to consult on bills which will severely impact our communities. I am asking that the committee on General Government be allowed to travel to the North, to see firsthand

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how the forest industry has suffered at the hands of this government and I am suggesting that we in Timmins want to be on that list.”

Tom Laughren, Mayor of Timmins – E-mail to municipal leaders, and Liberal, NDP and PC MPPs, March 31, 2011

“We understand that there is consideration for holding a single hearing at Queens Park and none in the rest of the province. While such a location will facilitate the large interest groups based in Toronto, it will do nothing to ensure that the people whose lives depend on the forest have an opportunity to present their views directly to the Committee in their home area. On behalf of the Northwestern Ontario communities whose economy depends on a well managed forest, we therefore request that hearings been held in Northwestern Ontario.”

Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association – Letter to the Standing Committee on General Government, April 1, 2011

“Further, limiting hearings to Toronto is disrespectful of forest-dependent municipalities across the province and does a great disservice to the Northern and rural communities that will be exposed to the yet untested tenure experiment contained in Bill 151.”

Ontario Forest Industries Association – Letter to the Standing Committee on General Government, April 1, 2011

“Where are the provincially elected officials within the government who are supposed to represent the people of Northern and rural Ontario? Where are the champions?”

Dave Canfield, Mayor of Kenora, April 4, 2011