



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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10 King Street East, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M5C 1C3 Tel: 416-368-6188 Fax: 416-368-5445 E-Mail: info@ofia.com

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Media Release

April 18, 2011

Overwhelming Stakeholder Opposition to Bill 151 at Standing Committee Hearings OFIA Sends Letter to Minister Outlining Outstanding Concerns

On Wednesday April 13, 2011 the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) added its voice to a growing list of stakeholders, companies, municipalities, municipal organizations and Chambers of Commerce who have expressed concerns and opposition at the Standing Committee on General Government hearings to the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 (Bill 151).

"Not only did we present to the Standing Committee at the hearings, we were in attendance for all of the presentations" says Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the OFIA. "The clear majority of presenters, specifically those that will be impacted by this Bill, expressed concern. It was very clear that people are asking the government to slow this process down," added Lim.

During her presentation to the Standing Committee, Lim outlined that the OFIA represents 27 member companies, and as such, does not look at Bill 151, or any other regulatory mechanism, with an eye to assessing how it impacts any one company. "We look at all public policy with the purpose of doing what is in the best interest of the forest sector as a whole, and Bill 151 will create serious uncertainty at a time when the industry is beginning to recover."

Leading up to the hearings, numerous municipalities and other stakeholders submitted concerns in writing to the government, via letter, e-mail and resolution, urging them to reconsider their approach to the Bill. Most recently the Ontario Bar Association (OBA), an organization which represents 18,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and students in Ontario, submitted a detailed review of the Bill's provisions, stating that "These provisions appear unfair to Ontarians and potential investors and we suggest they be redrafted to reflect a more balanced approach to the forestry partnership."

On April 15, 2011 the OFIA submitted a letter to Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry to re-iterate its concerns and to, once again, ask the government to support amendments to the Bill that would reflect the measured approach that was agreed to in January of this year.



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"Our members have been working with the government for over nine months and we have provided them with a list of recommended amendments. Based on conversations during the development of Bill 151, it was our understanding that our concerns were clearly understood and would be addressed in the original draft Bill," added Lim.

"Bill 151 should not pick winners and losers and certainly not pick between traditional and new. Bill 151 will be successful public policy only if we all work together and collaborate in addressing the various concerns. It is critically important that we support existing forestry operations with their "in demand" traditional products and we then build on this solid foundation" says Lim, adding "Let's work together to fix Bill 151 so that it preserves current employment and creates fertile ground for needed growth in the forest sector. We need to slow the process down and get this right; too many jobs in northern and rural Ontario are at stake."

Lim concludes "The OFIA and its member companies have committed to continue working productively with government to create a Bill that works for the entire forest sector before the House rises this summer".

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Jamie Lim, President & CEO - OFIA

Phone: 416-368-6188

Scott Jackson, Manager, Forest Policy - OFIA

Phone: 416-368-6188

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