



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

Home of CLA Grading and Inspection



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

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Untested Caribou Management Practices Hurting Northern Ontario OFIA Supports the Concerns of Northern Municipal Leaders over One-Pillar Policy

The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) is adding its voice to the growing number of northern municipal leaders who are expressing both concern and confusion with repeated statements from the Environmental Commissioner's Office (ECO) that the controversial, and untested, Caribou Conservation Plan (CCP) will have no socio-economic impacts on Northern Ontario and that "caribou protection is not a serious issue for forestry in northwestern Ontario". The ECO first dismissed the potential impacts of the new and untested caribou management practices in their 2011 Annual Report and later re-iterated the erroneous and misinformed sentiment during a CBC News interview.

A recent review of Forest Management Plans (FMP) on the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) website clearly shows that the implementation of new caribou protection measures under the CCP is reducing the area available for harvest operations and is resulting in dramatic reductions in available harvest volumes – both in Northeastern and in Northwestern Ontario. The forest sector of Ontario has been managing for caribou habitat through a mosaic approach since the mid-1990s and the OFIA recognizes and supports the need to manage for all wildlife species, including caribou, however believes that public policy needs to be based on all three pillars of sustainability – social, economic and environmental. The CCP is, unfortunately, one pillar policy that was developed with no consideration for social or economic values.

"If you look at the approved Forest Management Plans developed on the Lac Seul Forest and the Kenogami Forest you see reductions in harvest area or harvest volume of over 20%, resulting largely from application of new caribou management standards under the CCP. This is in addition to previous double digit reductions in fibre supply in the Northwest resulting from the introduction of caribou mosaics in the 1990s" says Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the OFIA, adding that the initial draft caribou management direction for the Abitibi-River Forest shows a similar, immediate reduction in harvest volume of 25% with volume losses of up to 65% after 20 years.

"To claim that there will be no impact resulting from the CCP is simply not true – we are already seeing the impacts in approved FMPs, and the result is a dramatic loss of fibre that will unnecessarily impact employment and stifle economic development" adds Scott Jackson, Manager of Forest Policy at the OFIA. "We encourage the public and the media to review the electronic FMPs on the MNR website and see for themselves" adds Jackson, stating that anyone seeking the truth should be able to find the relevant information in a rather short period of time.

“We support the ECO request for the government to be more transparent with regards to information, however this needs to go well beyond sharing information regarding where caribou are in Ontario as suggested by the ECO and include a full, transparent socio-economic impact assessment of the CCP and all of its elements. At the end of the day the untested CCP, and its associated management directions, are not simply limited to the areas where caribou are located as suggested by the ECO” concludes Lim, noting that the CCP mandates caribou management all the way down to the communities of Sioux Lookout, Hearst and Kapuskasing, and in areas well south of Cochrane (see attached map from the CCP). These caribou management zones supply critically important wood fibre to mills in communities located even further south including Dryden, Kenora, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Terrace Bay.

Since it was first introduced, the OFIA has been asking the MNR to conduct a transparent socio-economic impact assessment on the CCP. The MNR has continuously refused to respond to this request.

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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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