



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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Media Release

April 26, 2011

McGuinty Government Shuts Down Debate on Controversial Bill 151 (Forest Tenure Reform) Government Continues to Ignore and Misrepresent Stakeholder Input

Members of the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) are alarmed with the McGuinty government's efforts to shut down any further debate on the controversial Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act (OFTMA) (Bill 151). On Wednesday April 20, 2011, the McGuinty government filed a time allocation motion that would fast track the Bill through the Standing Committee on General Government and eliminate meaningful debate during committee meetings or in the House during Third Reading.

"This gives a cold shoulder to the overwhelming majority of stakeholders who have expressed their concerns and opposition to Bill 151 at the Standing Committee on General Government hearings" says Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the OFIA. "It is very clear that the government is not interested in anyone's opinions that differ from its own".

"First, the government voted down a motion to hold hearings on Bill 151 in Northern and rural communities, now they are trying to clearly prevent any and all discussion or debate on this issue" says Scott Jackson, Manager of Forest Policy at the OFIA.

The OFIA's members are concerned that despite a clear call from stakeholders across the province to slow down Bill 151 and to ensure that the proposed legislation accurately and effectively addresses the outstanding concerns of those that will be directly impacted, the McGuinty government has decided to turn a deaf ear and to proceed at any cost.

The OFIA's members are also concerned with the statements of provincially elected government officials that misrepresent the positions of concerned stakeholders. At a Standing Committee meeting on April 18, 2001 Mike Brown, Liberal MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, curiously claimed that the government has "significant support in the forest industry".



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“We watched every presentation made at the Standing Committee hearings and have reviewed the written submissions to the Committee and it is very clear that the vast majority of stakeholders are not in support of the government’s approach to this Bill” says Lim, “It certainly seems like some members of the Standing Committee believe it is their role to tell their constituents what is in their best interest rather than asking them what they need.”

The OFIA’s members are urging the government to make additional amendments to Bill 151. The proposed changes made by government to date fall short of expectations and do not fulfill the commitments made by Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, earlier this year.

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