



Media Release – Queen’s Park Event

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Forestry Coalition Asks Government to Support Sector

Leaders say Policy Must Consider Climate Change, Cumulative, and Socio-Economic Impacts

November 20th, 2017 – A coalition of municipal and Indigenous leaders, chambers of commerce, unions, and forest professionals are coming to Queen’s Park on Wednesday, November 22nd to dispel misinformation about Ontario’s forest sector and to urge the Government to avoid unintended consequences from rushed species at risk (SAR) policy.

Recently, a co-ordinated effort by groups opposed to forestry has attempted to label Ontario’s forest sector as unsustainable. On October 25th an opinion piece in the Toronto Star, authored by the David Suzuki Foundation and Environmental Defense, asked, “will anyone act to save the caribou? Ontario is not.” Similar comments were made by CPAWS Wildlands League and the American activist group Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC).

In response, FONOM President and Mayor of Kapuskasing, Al Spacek, said, “To claim Ontario has not acted to save caribou is conveniently ignoring over 20 years of work, 600 tracked animals and \$11 million dollars of government research.”

On October 18th, Ben and Jerry’s ice cream wrote a letter to provincial Ministers and Premiers to say that they are concerned about “unsustainable logging practices” in Canada’s boreal forest. NOMA President and Mayor of Shuniah, Wendy Landry, stated, “These attacks on forestry are extremely concerning. Decisions on policy need to be made on the best available science and informed by the people who are most impacted.” She went on to say, “Arguments presented by those with special interests and no skin in the game cannot be viewed as credible. We are forestry. This is our backyard and we deserve to have a say in the policy that governs it.”

Chair of ROMA and Mayor of the Township of Rideau Lakes, Ron Holman, said, “Each day, we grow more concerned with how activist rhetoric may threaten forest sustainability. New policy based on misinformation will have unintended consequences for communities in every region of this province.”

Chief Ed Wawia, from Red Rock Indian Band, stated, “The socio-economic impacts of the proposed species at risk rules have the potential to negatively impact Indigenous communities. If these proposed new regulations are implemented, the sustainable forestry businesses we have built and the jobs dependent on them will be lost.”

Jamie Lim, President and CEO of the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA), said, “Since 2013, we have been asking the Ministry of Natural Resources to act on their commitment to establish a panel that would review the linkages between the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) and the Endangered

Species Act (ESA). A change in timelines and an extension to the current Section 55 Rules in Regulation is required to take the appropriate amount of time to get things right.” She continued, “These are the affected stakeholders that need to form the panel. 57,000 direct jobs in this province are at stake and we can’t let misinformation get in the way of evidence-based policy decisions.”

Unifor’s Research Director, Bill Murnighan, concluded by saying, “Forestry is one of the most important sectors of the Canadian economy, shapes many of our communities, and affects a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. Policy can dramatically affect forestry and workers need to ensure their views are heard and their interests are represented. Their livelihoods should not be threatened and undermined by misinformation and policy should be based on solid science.”

About the OFC

The Ontario Forestry Coalition is a grassroots organization focused on ensuring government policy that supports the continued resurgence of Ontario’s renewable forest sector, the maintenance of full-time forestry jobs, the transition to a low-carbon economy, and the three pillars of sustainability.

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