



February 9th, 2017

Ms. Rhea Suh
President of the Natural Resources Defense Council
NRDC
HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK
40 West 20th Street, 11th floor
New York, NY 10011

Dear Ms. Suh,

Upon review of your recent campaign video “Stop the logging assault on Canada’s Boreal forest”, we felt it was important to correct the record with you directly.

Canada’s forests, 90% of which are on Crown lands, enjoy the #1 reputation in the world for how they are managed. According to a survey of international customers by Leger Marketing, Canada’s Forest Products Industry has the best environmental practices and reputation in the world. Every day, across our country, companies work with governments, First Nations communities, local municipalities and environmental groups interested in operating in good faith to help us manage and sustain this valuable resource for generations to come. Balancing the interests of doing right by the environment while sustaining good jobs in rural and northern Canadian communities is at the core of how we work in Canada.

Canada has 166 million hectares of sustainably managed certified forests, which represents more than half of Canada’s forestlands and over 40% of the certified forests worldwide. Each year, only 0.2% of those forests are actually harvested and all harvested areas are then regenerated. That’s the law here.¹ Furthermore, in Québec, 90% of public forests are certified by third party and internationally recognized FSC or SFI/PEFC standards.

You are likely not aware that while operating under strict regulations, within each province, areas of old growth are set aside. Within harvestable areas, foresters retain a threshold level of old growth stands. Other younger areas are retained to ensure a steady stream of forests will continue to reach old growth ages as existing old growth is disturbed or replaced. Canada has millions of hectares of older and mature forests. These forests are not disappearing, nor is our original forest area.

You are also probably not aware that since 2002 the Quebec government has established a northern limit preventing the harvesting of northern forests, protecting 85% of intact forestland.

¹ State of Canada’s forests 2015 <http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/36553.pdf>



The comment in the video on so-called “dead zones” is dead wrong. While old growth is often seen as a forest’s end, in reality it is just one stage in the life cycle. In fact, most of Canada’s forests have regrown from seedlings in the last 200 years² as the boreal ecosystem is subject to periodic burning by wildfires and outbreaks of insects that damage trees, both events that stimulate forest renewal.

Forests of different ages support different plants and animals, making the disturbance and renewal of old-growth trees and stands an essential part of the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem function³. Only through sustainable and responsible forest management can these forests stay intact. The pines, firs and poplars of the boreal will only live at most for a few hundred years, even in an undisturbed region, and significant areas will be affected by the pest afflictions and forest fires that commonly occur in the boreal. This will result in the release of methane gas emissions, which are a significant cause of climate change.

Forest management doesn't impair the boreal's ability to absorb greenhouse gases, and, instead, has actually improved that ability through harvesting and forestation as recognized and encouraged by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change⁴, prominent scientific researchers⁵ and governments^{6,7}. In North America this approach has already supported forest carbon stock increases of millions of metric tonnes, according the most recent Forest Resources Assessment conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations⁸.

² State of Canada's forests 2015 <http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/36553.pdf>

³ <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/fire-insects-disturbances/forest-need/13081>

⁴ <https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg3/ar4-wg3-chapter9.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.nature.com/news/carbon-sequestration-managing-forests-in-uncertain-times-1.14687>

⁶ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/managed-forests-and-climate-change>

⁷ <http://www.climateforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ip4-draft-2015-11-25-en-screen.compressed.pdf>

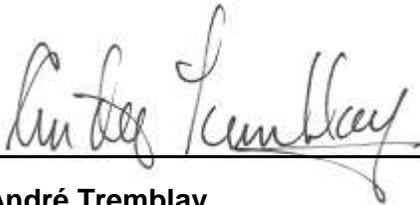
⁸ <http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/>

You should also be aware that in July 2015 Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard and Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come jointly announced the protection of 1.3 million acres (543,600 ha.) of the Broadback's globally important forests, lake and rivers. This announcement increased the protected areas to 2.28 million acres (890,308 ha.) which is equivalent to 20 islands of Montreal. This nation to nation work is critical to us in Canada and our sector supports and respects these agreements.

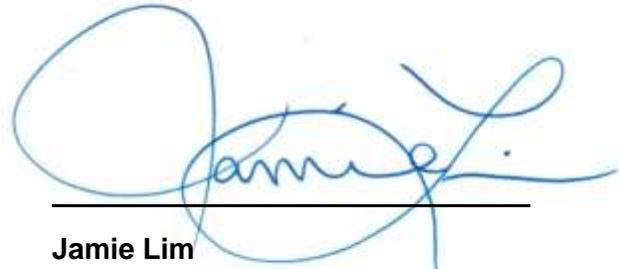
While we appreciate there is currently an "alternative facts" trend in the United States, we expect more from an organization like NRDC. Before you try to threaten the livelihoods of hard working, environmentally conscious people in rural Canada with misinformation, we would encourage you to better familiarize yourselves with our country, our laws and the science behind our sustainably managed forests.

We are an industry that prides itself in how it collaborates and works with its local communities across the country. Should you be interested in a briefing on the many land use planning and habitat protection initiatives we are supporting across Canada, we would be happy to offer that to you.

Sincerely,



André Tremblay
President & Chief Executive Officer
Québec Forest Industry Council



Jamie Lim
President & Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Forest Industries Association



Derek Nighbor
Chief Executive Officer
Forest Products Association of Canada

- c.c.:
- Honourable James Gordon Carr, Minister of Natural Resources
 - Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ontario
 - M. Luc Blanchette, ministre des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs, Québec