



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
Home of CLA Grading and Inspection



Growing a stronger, greener Ontario

Media Release

Ontario's Forest Sector Hoping Federal Government Won't Repeat History on Softwood Lumber File

May 30th, 2017 – The federal government has indicated that it will be making an announcement that will be a firm and clear demonstration of its intent to support the companies, workers and communities affected by the current softwood lumber trade dispute and the related unjust U.S. tariffs on Canada's softwood lumber exports.

The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) is looking forward to this announcement and is expecting that it will include a meaningful loan guarantee program that keeps Ontario's advanced manufacturing sawmills open and 57,000 men and women working as the softwood lumber negotiations progress.

OFIA has expressed disappointment in the past that, despite numerous meetings and discussions that have taken place with the federal government over the previous several months, there has been no confirmation of an effective loan guarantee program for the forest industry. Actions by the federal government related to this file have focused on adjustment provisions in anticipation of a bad agreement, as opposed to actions that will send clear signals to the U.S. that the Canadian federal government stands beside and behind its lumber industry and that it will not allow jobs to be lost to the bullying tactics of a protectionist U.S. administration.

"By not providing loan guarantees to the forest sector, Canada will be subjecting the industry to immediately crippling duties and costly litigation, ignoring the federal government's stated mandate of investing and growing our middle class" said Jamie Lim, President and CEO of OFIA. She continued, "anything short of an announcement on an effective loan guarantee program will be unacceptable and will put our competitive sawmills and our northern communities at risk."

For months, OFIA's members have been meeting with the federal ministers and officials and writing to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asking that they take immediate action in support of Ontario's forest sector. As of today, OFIA has yet to receive a meaningful or relevant response.

The announcement of a properly structured loan guarantee program is the first key step to this negotiation. It would not only provide the staying power to allow proper negotiations to take place, it would also send a message to the United States that Canada is not interested in repeating history on this file. Ian Dunn, Director of Forest Policy at OFIA stated, "providing loan guarantees will keep people working and will send a clear message to the U.S. administration that Canada is standing up for forestry. Workers in places like Hearst, White River, Terrace Bay, Kenora, Fort Frances and other single industry towns in the north need this recognition from the federal government."

Lim expressed doubt that developing new markets, enhanced Employment Insurance, and retraining of forest workers would be a viable solution for the Ontario sawmill industry, "Ontario does not have easy or economically viable access to coastal shipping routes and our workers, who have finally seen a rebirth of their industry and a restoration of their livelihoods in many

forestry dependent towns, want to stay in this industry. A program to retrain these workers for jobs that will not exist in small, northern Ontario communities would be misguided.”

Lim concluded, “we are not just hoping, we are expecting that any upcoming announcement will see the federal government deliver on its promise to leave no worker, region or family behind.”

About OFIA

Ontario’s renewable forest products sector supports over 170,000 direct and indirect jobs in over 260 Ontario communities. OFIA believes that by working with government to address key competitive issues, secure long-term access to affordable and accessible fibre and promote the province’s 21st century forest products sector, Ontario will be the number one jurisdiction in Canada for today’s green and growing renewable sector.

— 30 —

Contact information: Lauren McBride
Director of Communications
Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA)
416-368-2842
lmcbride@ofia.com