

2018 Election Commentary: HOW CAN YOU STAND UP FOR FORESTRY?

Provincial Forest Strategy

Other progressive and competitive jurisdictions around the world, like Finland, embrace the sustainable use of their forests. With workable public policy that fundamentally supports this renewable sector, Ontario can lead the way in forestry.

Ontario harvests so little – **less than 0.5%** – of its Crown Forests, yet the benefits are so great with 57,000 people directly employed –and we can do more! To put this in perspective, Ontario is three times larger than Finland and harvests approximately 15 million cubic metres, yet Ontario still harvests 80% less than Finland. This represents lost opportunity for Ontario.

Recognizing the growing value in its forests, Finland has developed the *National Forest Strategy* that sets priority objectives “aimed to achieve even better conditions for increasing the benefits derived from forest-based business and activities.”

Question: Will your party develop a Provincial Strategy that aims to increase the sustainable use and harvest levels of Ontario’s Crown forests?

Community Access and Forestry Roads Funding Program

In today’s global marketplace, it is critical that Ontario continually review the competitive measures to ensure they are indeed competitive. Primary and secondary roads are strategically important to natural resource development. If you limit northern and rural primary and secondary road infrastructure, you limit the economic development of communities and resource sectors.

Public access roads on Crown land are the lifeblood of Northern and Rural Ontario. With harvest levels steadily increasing in Ontario over the last several years, there is a greater demand for public access road funding to facilitate the increase and allow northern and rural communities to thrive.

Question: Will your party restore and maintain the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) budget for the Community Access and Forestry Roads Funding Program to \$75 million annually?

Endangered Species Act

Recognition of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) as an equivalent process to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), coupled with reasonable and workable prescriptions, is the most comprehensive solution for the health of Ontario’s forests and the protection of species at risk and their habitat. Under the CFSA, the long-term health and vigour of Crown forests are provided for by maintaining environmental, social and economic values over time. Whereas, ESA policy ignores the social and economic filters at the cost of working people. Ontario’s forest sector is plagued with administrative burden and red tape, and the ESA threatens to add more while negatively impacts jobs and wood supply.

Forestry employs 57,000 people directly and to support these jobs, wood needs to flow off the land base for 12 months of the year. Forest and mill workers, stakeholders and rights holders are largely absent from these discussions. However, they are the ones with the most at stake during this process. A one-pillar approach to policy will not help us reach the ultimate goal of forest sustainability.

Question: Will your party provide a long-term, workable solution to the Endangered Species Act?