

Media Release

## **OFIA's Forestry Advocacy Day at Queen's Park**

### **In Less Than 100 Days, Ford Government Announces Forestry Strategy Consultations**

**Thursday, September 27, 2018.** Today, the Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) celebrated National Forest Week with a Forestry Advocacy Day at Queen's Park. OFIA and its member companies met with members of Premier Ford's cabinet, including Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. OFIA and its members discussed the business, science and people behind Ontario's forestry sector and how a Provincial forestry strategy can attract investment, grow the economy and create jobs in every region of Ontario.

Erik Holmstrom, Chair of OFIA and Ontario Timberlands Manager for Weyerhaeuser, stated, "As members of OFIA, we are grateful for the opportunity to be at Queen's Park speaking to the people involved in making decisions that affect our livelihoods. Our businesses run and prosper on certainty, yet for Ontario's forestry community consistent access to affordable wood in Ontario is uncertain. We are thrilled about Minister Yurek's announcement to begin consultations on a Provincial forestry strategy and we look forward to working with the Ontario government to address barriers to wood supply, red tape and competitiveness through new progressive policy."

OFIA President & CEO, Jamie Lim, said "Our Crown forests belong to the people of Ontario and, as owners, we should be interested in the return on our investment. By harvesting so little – less than 0.5% annually – the benefits are so great. Ontario's forest sector provides well-paying jobs for 172,000 people in every region of the province and generates \$15.5 billion of economic activity, but, we can still do better. A Provincial forestry strategy aimed at increasing access to a renewable supply of fibre while addressing policy barriers will provide benefits to every region of Ontario."

"As a Director and past chair of the OFIA, I understand the need for a Provincial forestry strategy that makes Ontario's forest sector stronger and provides social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Ontario" commented Kris Heideman of Lavern Heideman & Sons. He continued, "Lavern Heideman & Sons is a third-generation sawmill providing well paying jobs in rural, Eastern Ontario for 45 years and currently employs over 100 hardworking men and women. We are eager to work with government to deliver on a commitment to attract investment and create good jobs across Northern and Rural Ontario."

His Worship Roger Sigouin, Mayor of Hearst, stated, “I am a proud member of Ontario’s forestry community and joined OFIA at Queen’s Park to advocate for the sector and my community. We are not loggers, but farmers in the forest. We harvest, we plant trees and we take care of the environment. I am hopeful that a Provincial forestry strategy will encourage investment and we will see our northern and rural communities thrive.”

OFIA believes that by working with government and affected stakeholders and rights holders to address key competitive challenges, we can make Ontario’s forest sector stronger, maximizing the full potential of Ontario’s renewable resource, create good paying jobs that will support sustainable growth for future generations.

### **About OFIA**

*Ontario’s renewable forest products sector supports over 172,000 direct and indirect jobs in 260 Ontario communities. Since 1943, the Ontario Forest Industries Association has represented forestry companies ranging from multinational corporations to family operated businesses producing advanced manufactured products and technologies. 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 21<sup>st</sup> century forest products sector, Ontario will be the number one jurisdiction in Canada for today’s green and growing renewable sector.*

**To learn more about OFIA and its innovative forestry members, follow us on Twitter @OFIA\_info, or visit [www.ofia.com](http://www.ofia.com).**

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