



ONTARIO FOREST INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

Growing a stronger, greener Ontario

## Media Release

# Ontario's Forest Sector Welcomes Premier Ford's Cabinet Looking Forward to Addressing Barriers and Making Ontario Open for Business

**June 29, 2018.** The Ontario Forest Industries Association (OFIA) congratulates and welcomes Premier Ford's cabinet Ministers. Ontario's forest sector is looking forward to working with the new government, and Honourable Jeff Yurek, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, to make Ontario open for business, with a vision of hope and prosperity in every region of this province.

For 75 years, OFIA and its 38 member companies have been working collaboratively with government, stakeholders, and rights holders to strengthen Ontario's forest sector. Today, Ontario's forest products sector contributes \$15.5 billion in economic activity, and exports of forest products have continued to increase each year since 2012.

For over a year, OFIA has advocated for a Provincial forestry strategy aimed to increase the sustainable use of Ontario's forests. With a majority government in place, Ontario's forest sector will continue working collectively to find long-term solutions that provide opportunities to grow the sector and contribute to Ontario's prosperity for the people of Ontario.

Erik Holmstrom, Chair of OFIA and Ontario Timberlands Manager for Weyerhaeuser in Kenora, said, "We are eager to begin work with Premier Ford's government and deliver on a commitment to attract investment and create good jobs in Northern and Rural Ontario. As a proud member of the OFIA, we believe this can only be accomplished by taking a sector-wide and long-term perspective." He continued, "Contributing over a century of expertise in sustainable forestry at Weyerhaeuser alone, Ontario's renewable forest sector generates real prosperity and directly supports 57,000 hardworking people. We look forward to working with the new PC government and Kenora's newly elected, Honourable Greg Rickford, to grow Ontario's only naturally renewable resource - forestry."

Dan Bowes, Ontario Woodlands Manager for Columbia Forest Products and OFIA Director said, "We are proud of the role that our sector plays in the socio-economic and environmental health of our communities. In Hearst and Rutherglen, we are investing in our mills, helping to create and maintain almost 350 jobs and boost economic growth, because we are confident in the future of forestry." He continued, "I would like to congratulate Honourable Vic Fedeli and thank him for all of his continuous support. I am hopeful that by working together with the PC government, Ontario's forest products sector will continue to thrive and grow."



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Kris Heideman of Lavern Heideman & Sons in Eganville, and OFIA Director said, “Our sincere congratulations to Honourable John Yakabuski in our riding of Renfrew. As a forestry company that has been in operation for 44 years, we appreciate the support Honourable Yakabuski has provided to our communities and the forest sector in southern and rural Ontario.” Heideman continued, “Through OFIA’s leadership and taking a sector-wide approach, we will assist Premier Ford’s government in realizing the full potential of Ontario’s forest sector.”

President & CEO of OFIA, Jamie Lim, stated, “At OFIA, we believe that by working together with our new government, affected stakeholders and rights holders, we can address key competitive challenges and provide a path full of opportunities for Ontario to grow and prosper. By maximizing the full potential of Ontario’s renewable resource through a Provincial forestry strategy, we can create good-paying jobs and bring hope and prosperity to every region of this province.”

### **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 21st 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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