
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2009FOR0033-000319
March 9, 2009

Ministry of Forests and Range

FORESTRY WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE B.C.'S ECONOMY

VICTORIA – The Working Roundtable on Forestry today released its report and recommendations for a vibrant and successful forest industry for future generations, announced Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell.

“All British Columbians benefit from a strong forest sector,” said Bell. “And this report reminds us of the tremendous forest-based opportunities that lie ahead. By setting a clear vision and priorities, everyone in our forest sector – industry, workers, communities and First Nations – can work with common purpose to create new jobs and drive the B.C. forest economy for decades to come.

The Working Roundtable on Forestry’s vision is for “a vibrant, sustainable, globally competitive forest industry that provides enormous benefits for current and future generations and for strong communities.” The Roundtable Report sets six priorities to help achieve the vision:

1. A commitment to using wood first.
2. Growing trees, sequestering carbon, and ensuring that land is available from which to derive a range of forest products.
3. Creating a globally competitive, market-based operating climate.
4. Embracing innovation and diversification.
5. Supporting prosperous rural forest economies.
6. First Nations becoming full partners in forestry.

The Working Roundtable also identifies 29 recommendations for actions that are consistent with these priorities. The 19 members of the roundtable brought a diversity of perspectives and experience to arrive at consensus on the vision, priorities and recommendations.

“I want to thank all roundtable members for their tremendous contribution,” said Bell. With backgrounds ranging from labour to local government to First Nations leadership, from land use planning to large scale manufacturing, the diversity of opinions and perspectives created a strong report that all members support.”

“Roundtable members are clear that no one entity can solve the problems facing the forest sector, or position the industry for future success. While it’s certain that government will continue to play a leadership role and the report will help shape forest policy, the recommendations are directed at all those involved in the forest industry. We all need to act together to achieve the benefits a vibrant forest industry can offer.”

Announced at last year's Truck Loggers Association Convention, the Working Roundtable on Forestry was formed in March 2008 and held meetings in 19 communities around the province. The Roundtable considered over 250 submissions from individuals, communities, First Nations, forest companies and associations, organized labour, environmental groups and citizens.

To download a copy of the report or for more information on the Working Roundtable on Forestry, visit www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/forestry_roundtable

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media Jennifer McLarty
contact: Public Affairs Officer
 Ministry of Forests and Range
 250 387-4592

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BACKGROUND

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ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Roundtable on Forestry released 29 recommendations directed at all forest sector stakeholders to achieve a vision of “a vibrant, sustainable, globally competitive forest industry that provides enormous benefits for current and future generations and for strong communities.”

1. We should continue to inform British Columbians and forest product consumers about the beauty, carbon friendliness, economic and other benefits of British Columbia’s forests and forest products.
2. All taxpayer supported buildings in British Columbia – federal, provincial and municipal must, and private sector buildings should, utilize and demonstrate wood and wood products whenever and wherever possible.
3. We should review our forest management and silviculture practices to ensure that they encourage maximum productivity, value and support forest resilience.
4. We should encourage the Western Climate Initiative to include forests in the identification of cap and trade opportunities for carbon credits.
5. We should enable the establishment of short-rotation fibre plantations.
6. We should establish a Carbon Offset Credit program for restoration of forests killed by the Mountain Pine Beetle where credits could be purchased.
7. We should establish commercial forest land reserves for key portions of the current forest land base where wood production will be a primary focus.
8. We should work to streamline transactions between government and industry to support a vigorous, efficient and world-competitive wood processing industry.
9. We should offer competitive bid timber sales as area-based sales and review our timber pricing system to ensure it is as simple and transparent as possible.
10. The provincial government and Union of British Columbia Municipalities should work with industry to ensure municipal tax structures support competitiveness and industrial activity in British Columbia communities.
11. We must establish labour arrangements that advance productivity and support competitiveness and investment while maintaining good working conditions and an adequate standard of living.
12. We should clearly define compensation rules for agreements between government and licensees, and in particular, what constitutes a taking of rights awarded through agreements and how compensation levels will be assessed.
13. We should establish clear competition policies to guide the transfer of tenure between licensees.
14. We should respond to the urgent needs of business, workers and communities during the current global economic downturn.

15. We must advance bioenergy and biofuel projects by creating competitive tenure and pricing frameworks to attract private sector investment.
16. We should establish a Wood Innovation and Design Centre focused on bringing together builders, architects, designers, artists and engineers to advance the commercialization of value-added wood building and design products.
17. We should create a forum to bring together leaders from the forest sector with those from chemical, energy, and other sectors to identify new wood based product and market opportunities.
18. We should continue to diversify forest product markets with particular emphasis on emerging markets such as China, ensuring that marketing efforts are sustained, coordinated and based on what end users want.
19. We should be proactive in exploring ways to ensure wood fibre is available for industry growth and product diversification while respecting tenure holders' rights.
20. We should increase the percentage of fibre that is available through competitively-bid timber sales.
21. We should develop an internet-based wood market.
22. Logs that are surplus to British Columbia manufacturing needs should be exported until local manufacturing capacity exists. The surplus test currently in use should be reviewed to ensure it is rigorous.
23. We should expand the Community Forest Agreement Tenure program.
24. British Columbia forest policies should reflect the unique forest attributes and socio-economic circumstances in different parts of the province.
25. We should create more long term, area-based forest tenures that are of an economically viable size, and create legislation for a First Nations forest tenure.
26. Revenue-sharing with First Nations should be proportional to the value of timber harvested in their respective territories instead of being calculated on a per capita basis.
27. We should encourage business and First Nations to become full partners in forestry businesses, in particular in emerging areas of opportunity including biofuels, bioenergy, carbon and reforestation.
28. We should strive to build capacity among First Nation governments, First Nation forest corporations and First Nation forestry institutions to achieve full participation in forest activities.
29. We should collaborate with First Nations to involve First Nations youth in forest employment opportunities.

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