
Media Release:

For Immediate Release

Date: May 14, 2008

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ONTARIO FORESTRY COALITION (OFC)

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce supports the Ontario Forestry Coalition (OFC) recommendation to encourage the Ontario Government to develop regulations under the Endangered Species Act that will not endanger the remaining forest operations in Ontario, and will recognize that the existing Crown Forest Sustainability Act has provided Ontario with the best forest and species stewardship in North America.

“It is important to Thunder Bay’s future economy that we discourage the implementation of the proposed rule, which would see at least 9,000 new permits required by forestry companies, duplicating the process which has already taken place,” remarked Brian Babcock, Chair of the Board of Directors, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce. He continued to explain, “These permits will be required for each and every block in a forest operation, and may in fact be required on an activity-by-activity basis (including haulage, harvesting, reforestation, water crossings, etc.). Such red tape will place severe financial hardship on an already fragile industry – and also fails to recognize the good work already done by forest companies under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.”

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce passed the following resolution at last evening’s Board of Directors meeting:

Whereas the Ontario’s Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA):

- Has been in place since 1994 and requires “that Forest Management Plans (FMPs) identify threatened and endangered species as “featured species” and provide for their protection within the area covered by the plan,”
- Is built on a model of continuous improvement and adaptive management,
- Forest management guides/guidelines must be reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years to ensure they incorporate and reflect new science, and

Whereas the implementation of CFSA has resulted in a proven, effective and efficient means of providing for species at risk; and

Whereas Ontario’s forestry practices are internationally recognized as world class;

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Therefore, be it resolved that the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce

- (a) Calls on the Government of Ontario to ensure that the “Endangered Species Act (ESA) will not replace the forest management planning process, but rather complement this process and provide opportunities to integrate species and habitat protection requirements”, and
- (b) Calls on the Government of Ontario to live up to the commitment made by the Minister of Natural Resources in May 2007, when he stated “specific recognition of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) and Forest Management Plans as equivalent processes which plan for species at risk (and) can be accomplished through Bill 184 (the Endangered Species Act). Specifically, Section 54 (now section 55) allows regulations to be made which can provide for forest management activities that address protection of species at risk and their habitat.”

This resolution was submitted to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Ontario Cabinet, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the New Democratic Party, Bill Mauro, MPP Thunder Bay/Atikokan, local media, NOMA (Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association), and NOACC (Northwestern Ontario Association Chambers of Commerce).

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For more information call:

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