

# 14 Conservation Groups Urge Federal Leaders to Ensure Tariff Relief Does Not Harm Canada's Forests

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Dear Federal Party Leaders,

As Canada navigates the volatile economic landscape brought about by increased tariffs on forest products shipped to the United States, we must ensure that uncertainty and fear do not lead to increased and unsustainable exploitation of irreplaceable primary and old growth forests in Canada. To safeguard these forests for today and for future generations, the following principles must guide Canada's response to potential trade issues affecting the forest sector:

## **1. Forest ecosystem health must be maintained as a pillar of economic security**

The abundance of natural resources in Canada is a significant national strength. However, over-harvesting and harmful logging practices are degrading forest integrity, drawing down Canada's forest resources and threatening long-term economic resiliency. (E.g., a [recent paper](#) highlights how the cumulative impacts of industrial logging in Ontario and Quebec have altered forest structure, while B.C. is facing a significant [decline in timber supply](#) due to decades of over-harvesting old growth.)

## **2. Public funding should support workers directly**

To redress the potential economic hardships created by tariffs, public funding should be directed to support workers rather than provide bailouts to corporations which could be unfairly used for executive bonuses or share buybacks rather than retaining and supporting employees. Funding should focus on wage protections, retraining programs, and investments in sustainable practices that create stable, well-paying jobs while maintaining and restoring forest ecosystem health.





### **3. Only Canadian-owned companies should receive federal subsidies**

Forests are an integral component of the fabric of Canada. Currently, many companies with non-Canadian ownership or influence are operating in forests in Canada. For example, the company Domtar, one of the largest pulp producers in the world, controls 20 million hectares of boreal forest in Ontario and Quebec and is owned by Paper Excellence, a sister company of Asia Pulp and Paper that is controlled by the Indonesian conglomerate Sinar Mas. Apart from direct support for workers, publicly-funded subsidies should support Canadian-owned forestry companies. Provinces should transparently report on and develop strategies to reduce influence and control over forests from outside of Canada.

### **4. Access to non-US, European markets must be maintained**

Recent EU regulations prohibit the purchase of forest products from forests that have been deforested or degraded. Unsustainable logging practices in Canada put this key export market at risk. Canada must acknowledge and reform current industrial logging practices that degrade forest ecosystems.

### **5. Long-term forest sustainability over short-term profits**

Canada will not achieve economic resilience if it follows the Trump Administration's deregulation agenda of expanded logging and diminished forest protection. Forests in Canada provide ecosystem services that benefit all Canadians, such as purifying air and water and flood mitigation. Planning for the long-term health and sustainability of Canadian forests is the best way to support the forestry industry.

### **6. First Nations leadership and consent must be central to forest policy decisions**

First Nations have stewarded forest ecosystems since time immemorial and hold deep knowledge about sustainable management practices. As Canada responds to tariff-related challenges, governments must uphold nation-to-nation relationships and ensure First Nations are full partners in decision-making processes that impact their traditional territories. This includes respecting Indigenous rights, recognizing First Nations' leadership in sustainable forest management, and ensuring that economic policies do not incentivize practices that undermine Indigenous governance, land stewardship, and long-term ecological health.



## **7. New investment should be made to add value and employment in the forest sector**

Canada's forests are diverse and productive and could produce abundant wood products on a sustainable basis. The decline and near collapse of the pulp and paper sector means that some of this wood could be dedicated to value-added products such as engineered beams and engineered lumber. Domestic sources of these materials would employ more Canadians and help provide the materials necessary to rapidly build the mid-rise housing stock that are needed so desperately in towns and cities across the country.

As evidenced by recent events in Canada and the United States, political and economic landscapes are subject to rapid and unpredictable change. Nature too is dynamic, but is also a constant source of regeneration and the building blocks of life. We must recognize the value of forests as long-term cultural, social and economic anchors.

Sincerely,



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