

Speaking Notes
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Introduction

- Thank you, Chair and Committee Members for this opportunity.
- In the forest industry, we're very proud of the work that we do and the products we make.
- Forest products are essential to our lives and livelihoods. Building materials for a safe place to live. Pulp for essential products like PPE, laboratory filters, and food packaging. And sustainable energy to keep the lights on in a cold Canadian winter.
- I'd add to that, a secure and sustainable livelihood for the 230,000 Canadians who work in our industry. Not to mention the additional 370,000 Canadians whose jobs are created by our economic activity. That's 600,000 total jobs dependent on forestry in Canada.
- And people can feel good about those products and jobs. They're contributing to the management of the most sustainable forest resource in the world. A resource that's part of the solution on climate change. And a vehicle to get us to net zero.

Forestry and the Economic Recovery

- On the economic side, our forest industry is key to the recovery right across the country. In Alberta, though, the situation is even more acute.
- We've seen our economy decimated by a downturn in the energy industry. Rural communities have been hit especially hard, with many resource jobs simply disappearing.
- Forestry communities, though, have fared much better. Our industry supports 40,000 jobs throughout the province. And they're stable, well-paying jobs. For many families, forestry has been a harbour in the storm.
- Our industry is stable, but we do have real needs to maintain a vibrant future.

Positive Steps

- I think that government has taken some positive steps for forestry in Alberta. And indeed across Canada.
- Minister O'Regan announced nearly \$70 million to support pine beetle control work in Alberta. This work is essential to forest health nation-wide.
- I know that Ms. Yurkovich and our colleagues in BC know all too well the destruction of the pine beetle – from both an environmental and economic perspective.

- By helping us hold the line in Alberta, you're helping to prevent that destruction from occurring in forest communities across the country. We really want to acknowledge Minister O'Regan and his excellent department officials at Natural Resources Canada for this important funding.
- Secondly, we are appreciative of the Government of Canada's recognition that forestry is part of the solution on climate change.
- We were encouraged that the Throne Speech identified foresters as key personnel in this fight. And committed to planting 2 billion trees. We will partner with you on these initiatives, every step of the way.

A Multi-Species Approach

- On the needs side, the first and most pressing item for our industry is to maintain access to the landbase. Without that landbase, and a stable supply of wood, nothing happens in forestry.
- Investments don't happen. Jobs don't get created. And products that the world needs don't get manufactured.
- One of the real challenges to maintaining that access, and those jobs, is the Species at Risk Act.
- It's a very prescriptive piece of legislation. That often calls for drastic steps.

- The real challenge is that there doesn't seem to present much of a 30,000 foot approach. One day, you're forced to take drastic measures that help one species but may not be beneficial to another.
- A year later, a different species comes up for review. And a whole different set of measures are on the table.
- It's a tunnel-vision approach. And for industry, it's really damaging.
- It's difficult to know where we're going. And where many of the measures restrict access to the landbase, it's difficult to make investments and plan for job growth.
- We need an approach that looks at the landbase and our species holistically. And drives towards a broader goal of healthy landscapes and forests. That support a diversity of species.
- It's time to end the prescriptive, one-off approach. And move to something more sustainable, for both our environment and our economy. It's time to consider overhauling the Species at Risk Act. And transitioning to a multi-species approach.

Working Forests and Shared Landscapes

- It's also time for a firm commitment to a working forest. By that, I mean forests that are managed collaboratively by government, communities, and foresters.
- We need to recognize that sterilizing our landbase, by excluding forestry and other resource industries, is not a tenable solution.

- It will lead to unhealthy landscapes, that are susceptible to forest fires and pest infestations. These events will not support species biodiversity and will harm recovery efforts.
- It will also hurt communities and undermine Canada's economic recovery. And it will take the greatest tool in the fight against climate change out of our hands.
- That tool is sustainably managed forests. We know that forests that are carefully planned and managed through harvesting and replanting are much more effective carbon sinks than those that are left untouched.
- Harvesting older forests, and sequestering that carbon in our homes, buildings, and products that we use every day, allows for the planting of new forests. These new forests capture carbon as they grow. And that growth and sequestration is the best way to achieve our net zero goals.
- By committing to a working forest and shared landscapes, we are doing the right thing for our communities. We are doing the right thing for our economy. And we are doing the right thing for our planet.
- Thank you.