

# BACKGROUND

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For Immediate Release

## BC NDP Five-Point Forestry Plan

### Goals:

- A profitable and competitive forest industry that creates more good-paying jobs;
- Improved forest health;
- Reduced raw log exports and the creation of more value-added forest jobs in B.C.; and
- Support for forestry workers, communities and companies to adapt to post-pine beetle change.

**Priority Action One:** Address the critical shortage of skilled workers in the forest sector as part of a broader skills training plan.

- Investing in people is the shared number one priority between government and industry;
- Improve access to skills training opportunities to prepare workers for the increasingly high-tech jobs that exist in the forestry and value-added sectors.

**Priority Action Two:** Implement a five-year strategic and operational forest health plan that will increase funding by \$100 million annually, phased in over the next five years.

- Update resource inventories and consult with stakeholders to identify priority geographic areas;
- Double replanting rates on Crown land that has been left barren;
- Enhance Ministry of Forests research capacity, particularly at the regional level;
- Better facilitate engagement on land-use planning at regional and local levels;
- Protect and prepare rural communities for severe wildfire seasons.

**Priority Action Three:** Work with and provide tangible support for industry-led efforts to identify new global markets and grow forest product exports.

- Focus B.C.'s existing trade development resources on working with the industry;
- Ensure at a senior political level that industry-led efforts are supported.

**Priority Action Four:** Use B.C. logs to create B.C. jobs.

- Work with stakeholders to reduce raw log exports and create more value-added forestry jobs in British Columbia.

**Priority Action Five:** Establish a Jobs Protection Commissioner.

- Support communities and industries in transition and facing timber supply shortages due to the impacts of the pine beetle infestation.
- Minimize job loss, help local economies adapt, and enhance the long-term economic competitiveness of resource industries.

**Costing:**

Increase funding by a total of \$100 million annually phased in over the next five years. The increase over the next three years is:

- 2013/2014 = \$30 million additional
- 2014/2015 = \$40 million additional
- 2015/2016 = \$60 million additional

**Current Situation:**

- B.C.'s forests represent a trillion-dollar asset that has been badly mismanaged by the BC Liberals for more than a decade.
- The volume of logs exported has doubled since 2009. An unprecedented 5.7 million cubic metres of raw logs were shipped out of B.C. in 2012, enough to fill logging trucks lined bumper-to-bumper from Vancouver to Thunder Bay.
- In February 2012, Auditor General John Doyle issued a scathing rebuke of the government's mismanagement of B.C.'s forests, saying that it is leading to lower timber supply and less species diversity.
- The 2013 budget cut \$35 million from forest health which supports critical activities like replanting and inventory management.
- Since 2001 the B.C. Forest Service has been cut by over 1,000 positions – one quarter of its workforce – meaning fewer eyes on the ground to manage B.C.'s greatest resource.

**Media Contact:** Michael Gardiner, 778-836-2108