



Forest Health and Fire Risk Mitigation Must Underpin Forest Policy Discussions

November 8, 2023 (Ottawa) – Earlier today, Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) issued the following statement in response to claims by anti-forestry campaigners and fundraisers about forest management in Canada:

“Canada is among the best in the world in how we sustainably manage our forests for multiple values. The work of Canada’s foresters is constantly evolving as forest health and the safety of Canadians living in forested communities is increasingly challenged by worsening pest and fire outbreaks.

This year was Canada’s worst fire season in history. Over 18.4 million hectares burned which represents nearly 25 times the land base that our foresters sustainably harvest in an entire year.

We saw fires in communities that never experienced them before and tens of thousands of people were evacuated, with Indigenous communities being disproportionately affected by these evacuations.

Six people died, hundreds of Canadians lost their homes, and critical northern and rural infrastructure was put at risk.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the Canadian military, national and international firefighters, first responders, and community volunteers who stepped up. Without them, the losses would have been much greater.

As we emerge from this difficult year, the call to action for more active management of Canada’s forests has never been clearer. Our collective experience underscores the urgency of proactive measures to mitigate wildfire risks, safeguard our people and communities, and protect vital infrastructure. Through active management of our forests, we can curtail the intensity and frequency of future fires while also supporting ecosystems resilience and rural and northern economies.

Canada’s forest sector and its workers support the importance of global pledges to advance climate action, halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation, and promote sustainable sourcing. These efforts are part of a bigger international dialogue, and Canada must do this work in step with its international partners.

In doing so, we encourage the Government of Canada to ensure the full participation of impacted rightsholders and stakeholders who live, work, and raise their families in our forested communities.

Today's call by anti-forestry campaigners and fundraisers to restrict forest management is wrong-headed and would make future fire seasons even worse. It would also worsen Canada's carbon emissions story.

A recent study released by Parks Canada and the Canadian Forest Service indicates that some parks, particularly those impacted by major wildfires, act as net carbon sources. Our rapidly changing climate underscores the urgent need for climate smart forestry interventions including a return to prescribed burns, more active thinning to reduce fuel loads, building more fire breaks around communities and critical infrastructure, and finding more uses and new markets for low-grade wood."

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FPAC provides a voice for Canada's wood, pulp, and paper producers nationally and internationally in government, trade, and environmental affairs. As an industry with annual revenues exceeding \$73B, Canada's forest products sector is one of the country's largest employers operating in over 600 communities, providing 225,000 direct jobs, and over 600,000 indirect jobs across the country. Our members are committed to collaborating with Indigenous leaders, government bodies, and other key stakeholders to develop a cross-Canada action plan aimed at advancing forest health, while supporting workers, communities and our environment for the long term.

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