



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Building Forest Policy for British Columbians Without Catering to Foreign Interests***

**January 17, 2018, Vancouver** – BC needs to change its perspective on softwood lumber trade with the US to better support the provincial forest industry.

“Looking at everything through a US trade lens stops us getting to the heart of forest policy issues in BC,” said David Elstone, TLA Executive Director. “We can’t have frank conversations about forest policy, regulations and initiatives because we’re always looking over our shoulder at the US.”

The report on the Contractor Sustainability Review led by George Abbott is due later this month and the Truck Loggers Association wants to make sure forest industry and government are in a position to act on its recommendations.

“BC provincial governments have modified forest policy and regulation to assuage U.S. interests more than once. The last time was in the early 2000s which resulted in sweeping changes to BC’s timber harvesting rights and stumpage systems,” said Elstone. “Unfortunately, those changes ended up negatively affecting BC’s timber harvesting contractors and rural communities.”

Fast forward a decade to today, and the U.S. government has brought exactly the same complaints to the table as it did in the early 2000s. “It’s time for BC to stop the hoop jumping to appease the unappeasable and focus on what is best for British Columbians in terms of forest policy,” said Elstone. “There are major problems within our industry right now and we need to fix those problems without worrying about foreign interests.”

“The BC government has done an excellent job to help market our timber products globally and our reliance on the US is much less than it used to be,” said Elstone. “It is still our largest market though and we need to be sensitive to that. However, it is high time to start putting the interests of British Columbians above those from south of the border.”

The softwood lumber dispute, the challenges facing BC’s forest policy and regulation, and the impacts thereof will be discussed throughout the 75<sup>th</sup> TLA Convention and Tradeshow, taking place in Victoria, January 17 to 19, 2018.

- Background reading: [It’s Time For Another Leap of Faith by David Elstone, RPF](#)
- [Link to the full media package](#)

*The TLA (Truck Loggers Association) represents 489 independent forest contractors and their suppliers operating in British Columbia. Our membership supports thousands of workers and, along with other independent contractors, accounts for close to 90 per cent of the trees harvested in BC. The TLA promotes a thriving, sustainable forest industry in BC.*

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