

# MAKING SURE B.C.'S FORESTRY SECTOR HAS A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Premier John Horgan

From day one, our government has been about people. We're working every day to make life better for people all over the province. That means investing in good-paying, sustainable jobs in every corner of B.C., including in B.C.'s iconic forest industry.

The forest sector is a cornerstone of economic activity in British Columbia, supporting families, communities, and jobs across our province. As a major manufacturing and export industry, there are forestry jobs all over B.C. In rural and remote communities, forestry employs more than 57,000 British Columbians and supports over 7,000 businesses. One-third of our exports are forest products, which means that forestry jobs also extend into urban B.C., in occupations such as transportation, warehousing, shipping, towing, customs, accounting, sales and marketing, and others.

Given forestry's long history in B.C., it would be easy to view the industry as part of the "old economy"—different and apart from our growing technology sector. Fact is, forestry is a significant customer for parts of B.C.'s technology industry, and technology is central to every part of modern forest management.

Today's foresters use satellite-enabled technologies to see through the forest canopy, to direct harvest planning, monitor site conditions and respond more effectively to wildfires. Drones are used to cost-effectively scan large areas of forest. Technology makes harvesting operations safer and allows remote-controlled machines to access slopes that would be too dangerous to harvest by hand. Modern lumber manufacturing is high tech too, using scanners to optimize the use of each log and computer-linked machinery to guide each step of processing logs into lumber. New products, like Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), create additional jobs and value from our lumber, and make it possible to build strong, safe skyscrapers from wood.

Wood products are used in tall applications and small ones, from the 17-storey Brock Commons student residence at UBC to the 2,000 new supportive

modular homes that were built in 22 communities during 2018, to help address B.C.'s homelessness crisis. Wood building materials can also help British Columbians tackle climate change and spur a greater demand for top quality manufactured wood products as a clean, natural, healthy, renewable building material.

Government is working with First Nations, communities and the industry to develop a fair, lasting strategy to strengthen forestry all over B.C. I asked Forests Minister Doug Donaldson to lead the Coastal Forestry Revitalization Initiative, which will renew our forest policy framework, help to expand domestic manufacturing, encourage getting more value out of every log, provide new opportunities for First Nations, and encourage innovation and a better business climate.

We're moving forward on our government's commitment to implement UNDRIP and to build a true partnership with First Nations based on rights, respect and reconciliation. In the forest sector, we're continuing to explore ways Indigenous communities can benefit from forestry activities on their lands. The Province recently entered into a unique community forest agreement for the Qala:yit Community Forest—the first of its kind in B.C. The Pacheedaht First Nation, BC Timber Sales, Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative, and the Province are all working together to create good jobs and more opportunities for people in the Cowichan Lake communities. Partnerships like these will inspire new ventures and processes of working together, protect the environment, promote economic opportunity and growth, and manage land and resources.

Across B.C., 2018 was another devastating wildfire season, with over 1.3 million hectares of land impacted by wildfires. Hundreds of industry contractors assisted the BC Wildfire Service in fighting the fires and keeping communities safe. Thanks to everyone's dedication and hard work, not one life was lost. Acting on lessons learned during 2017



Photo courtesy of the NDP

and 2018, as well as the recommendations from the report by George Abbott and Chief Maureen Chapman, the BC Wildfire Service is looking at changes to be better prepared for 2019 wildfires.

The TLA selected a theme of "Making it Work" for your January 2019 convention, representing so much that is going on across the forest sector, as well as your organization's 75 years of representing logging contractors and other members. In that regard, I am pleased that Dan Miller has been able to help logging contractors and licensees reach agreement to work together on developing rate models and rate determination factors.

Looking forward, B.C.'s forest sector continues to explore innovative ways to make better use of our vast resources. Together with partners in all parts of the industry, our government is working to grow demand for our wood products, design services, and building technologies, and to expand foreign markets for B.C. lumber. We're working hard to make sure B.C.'s forest industry has a strong, sustainable future—for everyone. I look forward to working with you and continue building a better British Columbia.▲