

BC GOVERNMENT'S OPTIMISTIC VISION FOR CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

By Premier John Horgan

Wood fuels British Columbia's economy. Our province has one of the world's most sustainable and innovative forest sectors. We are facing challenging times in the industry: from climate change, to ongoing trade disputes, to the protracted coastal labour dispute and the challenge of ensuring the industry is aligned with the changing profile of coastal forests.

And while the challenges facing our Interior sector are equally daunting, the heart of our forestry sector remains its people.

Forestry remains a cornerstone of our economy, and our government is proud to work with you to move the sector forward.

What we are experiencing today is more than a transition, it's a transformation. Long-term prosperity for forest workers and forest communities means finding new markets and getting more value from our forest products. To do that, we need to make sure the industry is up to the challenges ahead.

Our government is doing everything we can to help the forest industry get the most value out of every log, grow our manufacturing sector, promote innovative products in markets around the world, and create good jobs in local communities. We need everyone with an interest in the future of forestry to help us shape that future. We need to work together as we revitalize the Coast forest sector by increasing the processing of BC logs within the province and redirecting waste fibre to BC's pulp and paper mills. And we need to work together to find locally-driven solutions to build a forward-looking vision for timber supply areas in BC's Interior.

Partnerships with First Nations are an essential part of building a better future for BC's forestry sector. Guided by the new *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which became

law in November, we can establish a predictable and collaborative path forward with Indigenous peoples, communities and businesses on land and resource management. We now have 13 signed partnership agreements between First Nations on Vancouver Island and BC Timber Sales, including Cowichan Tribes, K'ómoks First Nation, Qualicum First Nation and the Nanwakolas Council member First Nations. These agreements will bring economic benefit and build relationships. We are sitting at the table with industry and First Nations,

building partnerships that create better outcomes and opportunities for everyone. By working together, we can balance environmental stewardship with economic opportunity and growth.

BC is globally recognized for its innovative value-added wood products and mass timber is a cost-effective and sustainable evolution that focuses on value over volume. BC communities are embracing mass timber technology for tall wood buildings, with cities such as Victoria, Campbell River, Kelowna, and Surrey signing on to become early adopters.

At a time of global focus on climate action, mass timber can help us unlock BC's full economic potential and create good jobs for forest workers. Our government is doing what we can to encourage companies to make the transition.

This year, as part of the CleanBC plan to reduce climate pollution, the Province changed the building code to allow wood building construction up to 12 storeys using fire-resistant, engineered wood. We also directed that engineered wood is used, where possible, for \$20 billion in public infrastructure projects over the next three years, including schools, housing and hospitals—like the new St.



Photo courtesy of the NDP

Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and the Royal BC Museum in Victoria. Innovative partnerships, like the one between Pinnacle Renewable Energy and Mitsui, will also see BC wood transformed into clean, renewable electricity in Japan and good-paying jobs here in BC.

The BC Government's vision for the future of forestry is an optimistic one. Change and transformation can be difficult, but together we can tackle the challenges ahead and find solutions that work for people. Forestry remains a cornerstone of our economy, and our government is proud to work with you to move the sector forward. Let's build a stronger, healthier forest industry for the people and communities who depend on it.▲