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January 31, 2020

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Forest Sector Strategy - Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
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Submitted Online Via the [Environmental Registry of Ontario](#)

RE: ERO Number: 019-0880

Re: ONTARIO FOREST SECTOR STRATEGY

From: Township of James.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments related to the DRAFT Forest Sector Strategy as per the Environmental Registry Notification Number 019-0880. We were pleased to be able to have the chance to attend the information session held in North Bay on January 21, 2020.

My comments on the Draft Strategy are as follows:

- Municipalities are largely left out of forest sector decision making until there is a crisis (i.e. mill closures such as Iroquois Falls, Fort Frances etc) despite the fact that they provide services to mill operations and employees. The fact that you have included an improvement in "...collaboration in managing our forests" is a step in the right direction.
- The strategy identifies goals that are consistent with the intent of the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act (OFTMA). The Act outlined the establishment of at least two Local Forest Management Corporations (LFMCs) in the Province. To date, only one has been created. The Strategy is silent on specifically connecting the stated goals with that

of the OFTMA. The final Strategy should re-iterate the Province's intentions with respect to the Tenure Modernization. The MNRF should continue to support the establishment of an LFMC on the Temagami Forest (we have been a participant since DAY ONE) and should support the establishment of more LFMCs throughout the Province.

- Municipal roads that provide part of the access from the forest to the mills (Pine Street in Elk Lake is only one example) are subject to excessive heavy traffic. Typically, there is no mechanism for additional financial support from the Province to offset this additional burden. In the past, the Township of James has suggested to the Ministry that a 37 cents/m³ be provided to the communities affected. To date, we have not received a formal response from the Province.

In the absence of a volume-based funding allocation to the municipality, we suggest that pool of funding be created (over and above the existing Crown Road Program funding) that could be accessed by municipalities that are required to maintain key segments of the access to mills.

- We support the Provincial Forest Roads program, however if one of the goals of the forest strategy is to increase the volume of wood harvested in the Province, efforts should be focussed on Management Units that currently have the poorest rates of timber utilization.
- Energy and Forest Products – The MNRF needs to help coordinate efforts with energy agencies (Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines) that will facilitate generation of renewable energy through the use of residual forest products. Currently, the capacity for transmission is below capacity to generate. Micro-grids or other small-scale opportunities may help cut costs utilize additional forest products.
- “Pine reserves” and “All Tree Reserves” remain in place on a considerable number of private properties in Northern Ontario. The MNRF should review its policies on issuing releases on these reserves, and enable landowners (often municipalities) quicker, more efficient access to these resources. In one recent local case, the MNRF indicated that it would charge a municipal 16 individual administration fees (one for each 40 acre parcel) to process the transaction. Given the reduction in staff within the MNRF and a decline in the government's ability to manage the Crown Timber on Private Land, the Province should consider transferring the timber reserves on title to the individual municipalities.
- Fostering Innovation – MNRF needs to work more closely with NOHFC to support and foster new entrants, projects and initiatives. It seems like NOHFC is always the “last in” when it comes to making financial commitments for projects.
- New funding should be made available for small players as well as large ones. The funding thresholds are often too high to be of any value to new players and therefore are only of benefit to existing large companies like Eacom, Rayonier, and Resolute (none of which are Ontario based).

- MNRF needs to work with municipalities like Temiskaming Shores who are working with neighbouring communities and companies to identify where support can be provided. This might include advocacy, education, and recruitment to help the forest sector
- Although immigration issues are largely federal in jurisdiction, the MNRF should be more involved in working to recruit “new Canadians” to work in the forest sector
- Forest Management Planning process has become an unwieldy process taking over 3 years to complete, costing 100’s of thousands of dollars and resulting in a document and plan that is largely incomprehensible to most of the people affected by it. The Township supports the Ministry’s efforts to simplify and streamline the planning process, however public consultation (particularly for local residents) **MUST NOT** be compromised.

I recognize that many of the above recommendations and comments are more applicable to the implementation phase of this undertaking as opposed to the current Strategy Development Phase.

To this end, I cannot overstate the importance of the implementation phase in a timely and efficient manner.

During the presentation of the Draft, the MNRF staff indicated that an Implementation Advisory Committee would be formed following the adoption of the Strategy. As a forestry-dependant community with a strong track record in participating with Provincial Forestry Initiatives, the Township of James would like to be considered for a seat on this important committee.

I look forward to further communication on this matter.

Regards,



Terry Fiset
Reeve
Township of James

c.c. John Vanthof; Member of Provincial Parliament; Timiskaming-Cochrane
Lois Perry; Chair; Temiskaming Municipal Association
Dan Whalen; President; Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities