

June 8, 2010

To Our Industry Partners:

I am writing you to express my concern with an issue that has the potential to limit the rights of all landowners and fibre producers in Nova Scotia to manage their forest lands and, ultimately, to seriously weaken our provincial forest industry.

In 2007 the provincial government committed to complete a new Natural Resources Strategy for Nova Scotia by the end of 2010. The three-phase process included 27 public meetings in 2009, which many landowners attended and voiced their support for sound forest management practices and the rights of landowners to manage their lands for their own objectives. The second phase involved the selection of a Steering Panel and three-person Panels of Expertise to produce a report on each of the four main areas—forests, minerals, parks, and biodiversity.

The three members on the Forests Panel of Expertise (Bob Bancroft, Donna Crossland, and Jon Porter) were not able to agree on a single set of recommendations. This resulted in two forests reports being filed with the Steering Panel. As a result of these different approaches, the Steering Panel also made their own recommendations on how our forests should be managed in the future.

I urge you to review the two forests reports and the report from the Steering Panel, which are available at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/strategy2010/phase2report.asp> or at regional offices of the Department of Natural Resources.

There are numerous recommendations that would:

- **severely restrict landowners rights,**
- **reduce wood supply,**
- **drive up costs to landowners and industries,**
- **be extremely costly for government to implement.**

Many of these recommendations are also scientifically flawed.

Attached is a sampling of the recommendations from the reports.

Development of the new Forest Strategy for Nova Scotia is underway within the Department of Natural Resources now. If the recommendations in the reports concern you as a private landowner, I urge you to express your concerns to the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources **as soon as possible before the Strategy is completed** (contact information follows).

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<p>Premier Darrell Dexter Office of the Premier 7th Floor, One Government Place 1700 Granville Street PO Box 726 Halifax, NS B3J 2T3</p> <p>Telephone: 902-424-6600 Facsimile: 902-424-7648 Electronic Mail: premier@gov.ns.ca</p>	<p>Minister John MacDonell Minister of Natural Resources Department of Natural Resources 3rd Floor, Founders Square 1701 Hollis Street PO Box 698 Halifax, NS B3J 2T9</p> <p>Telephone: 902-424-4037 Facsimile: 902-424-0594 Electronic Mail: min_dnr@gov.ns.ca</p>
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At Bowater Mersey, we believe there is a need for continued improvements in the way forests are managed in Nova Scotia. However, a government-dictated approach to forest land management is ineffective, inefficient, and costly. We must be allowed to continue the path of improving our forest management practices based on a comprehensive "best management practices" approach supported by expanded technical assistance from the Province.

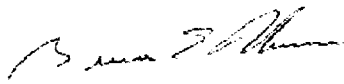
The past few years have been an incredibly difficult period for the Canadian forest products industry. Across the country mills have closed and thousands of people have lost their jobs. Nova Scotia is currently the only province in Canada that has not had a pulp and paper mill permanently close. The battle for survival continues.

The forest products industry is critical to the Nova Scotia economy. We all depend on each other to make it work. Nova Scotia needs a Forest Strategy that supports improved forest management and the forest industry. Getting the balance right has never been more critical to the provincial economy, private landowners, wood-using businesses, and working families in rural Nova Scotia. **Please make your concerns known to government.**

I thank our fibre suppliers for staying with us through this challenging period. We continue to need your support as we work diligently to earn a place for Bowater Mersey in the ranks of globally competitive Canadian mills.

If you would like further information, please contact your Mersey Woodlands representative or Andy Strowbridge (902-354-8648 or andy.strowbridge@abitibibowater.com).

Sincerely,



Bruce Nunn
Vice President and Resident Manager

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Attachment

Below are some of the recommendations that could negatively impact private landowners. Many of these will force landowners to implement items such as management plans, certain harvest methods, and the Code of Forest Practices.

Steering Panel Report

2. With broader stakeholder input, complete, implement, and enforce the Code of Forest Practices on both public and private lands.
3. Require management plans prior to cutting on all public and private lands.
4. Allow clear-cutting by permit only.
5. Allow use of pesticides and herbicides by permit only.
6. Stop whole-tree harvesting as a forestry practice, except for Christmas tree farms.

Bancroft/Crossland Report

10. Reduce the annual harvest on both Crown and private lands to conform to the new model of ecologically based forestry. The government will need to devise a mechanism to regulate quantities harvested, perhaps through regulating exports and industry acquisitions.
15. Develop a reverse-onus policy and permit system for clear-cutting on both private and Crown lands, where justification is required of the absolute need in spite of the ecological implications to conduct clear-cutting. The permit system could be administered by the local Integrated Resource Management team. Money from the permits could fund ecologically sustainable silviculture treatments and education.
16. Enact legislation to prohibit clear-cutting of tolerant hardwood stands and phase in restrictions on clear-cutting shade-tolerant, mixed-wood, and softwood stands.
18. Ban whole-tree harvesting (taking tops, trunks and limbs; leaving stumps and roots).
23. Expand special management (riparian) zones to widths of 50 metres, or even 100 metres in places, with no harvesting within them to within 30 metres, where even-aged harvesting is used.
25. Herbicide use should be banned on Crown lands and discouraged on private lands except in unusual circumstances, such as for controlling invasive exotic plants.
26. Government funding for herbicides should be fully eliminated (except for invasive species treatments).
67. Increase the forest resources tax assessment for landowners who have no land management plan.

70. Make having a land management plan a requirement before small woodland owners can access silviculture funding.
75. Consider a permit system administered by Department of Natural Resources' Integrated Resource Management teams for intensive forest management on private land holdings.

If you agree that a best management practices approach should be adopted by the Strategy, the following recommendations are examples that you may feel you can support.

Steering Panel Report

8. Strongly encourage best management practices on private lands.

Porter Report

3. Private landowners must retain the fundamental right to decide when and where to harvest forest products on their lands according to their objectives.
13. Mandatory buffers under the Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations should remain at 20 metres to protect water quality.
29. Landowners should continue to use both extensive- and intensive-forest management approaches and have access to a full range of practices. This will allow them to make the right choices based on their objectives and the forest conditions.
50. Implement a comprehensive best management practices approach to improving forest management outcomes on private lands, rather than additional command-and-control regulation.
51. Implement a greatly enhanced and expanded extension effort to support a best management practices approach and help woodlot owners understand their rights and responsibilities; their options for management, including harvesting practices; and the value of forest management plans.

Complete reports are available at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/strategy2010/phase2report.asp> or printed copies are available at the regional offices of the Department of Natural Resources in Lunenburg, Truro, and Sydney (Coxheath), and at the Founders Square Department of Natural Resources office in Halifax.