

OPEN LETTER TO NEW BRUNSWICK DNR MINISTER PAUL ROBICHAUD

May 15, 2014

Dear Minister Robichaud:

We in the academic community of New Brunswick are deeply concerned about recent announcements and actions by the provincial government regarding forest policy in the province. Specifically, we believe there has been a lack of proper consultation and transparent consideration of scientific evidence regarding: (i) the proposed *Strategy for Crown Lands Forest Management* that seeks to increase wood supply by approximately 20% for softwoods; and (ii) the JDI agreement (contract) that commits the province to provide JDI with specific wood supply quantities over the next 25 years.

Based on the information to date, we now appear to have a strategy which was formulated behind closed doors, has serious conservation shortcomings, has questionable socio-economic benefits for the public, limits the government's ability to shape future forest policy, and potentially compromises government's management oversight of the public forest. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how this strategy addresses issues identified in the various forestry task force reports and government-sponsored studies prepared in recent years, and how (if at all) the recommendations of these reports and studies are being implemented.

We therefore call on the government to immediately halt its current course of action, assemble the collective wisdom that has been accumulated over the past number of years through reports/studies and academic research, and revisit the strategy.

To effectively revisit the strategy, the government needs to responsibly inform the public of its proposed course of action and engage them in the planning process. To this end, we request that the government forthwith:

1. Provide full details on the proposed Crown lands forest management strategy that outlines the logic, rationale, tradeoffs, and technical underpinnings that were considered.
2. Provide a full disclosure of the JDI contract, or convincing explanations of why certain clauses have been deemed confidential. Contracts with other licensees should be released before signature.
3. Engage appropriate parties in an open and constructive way to modify the current strategy and agreement so as to retain some of its intended benefits while removing the sources of the most justifiable and serious concerns.
4. Extend the intended timeline to approve the Crown lands forest management strategy as needed to ensure that the policy has the support of the public.

We believe that, if such actions are taken by the provincial government, it will help ensure that New Brunswick's Crown forests are managed sustainably for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

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