



Timmins Chamber of Commerce
Chambre de commerce de Timmins

MEDIA RELEASE

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ONTARIO GOVERNMENT PAPER PROCUREMENT POLICY BAD FOR FORESTRY INDUSTRY

TIMMINS: At a time when local forest industries are in dire straits financially, Queen's Park has unilaterally cut off access to business for some companies.

In 2004, David Ramsay, Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources, announced that all Ontario forest companies operating under sustainable forest licenses would be required to receive certification by 2007 through any of the three major certifying bodies: the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). However, last month Gerry Phillips, Minister of Government Services, announced a paper procurement policy that gives preference to one certification standard over the others.

The new government policy states that 30% of all paper purchased by the Ontario government will come from FSC-certified forests only. "We question why the Ministry of Government Services should exclusively award a portion of the government's business to companies certified by one standard," said Timmins Chamber of Commerce President Marilyn Wood. "This is in direct conflict with the previous requirement by the Ministry of Natural Resources to recognize all three certification standards."

Ontario has world class forest management practices, and local forestry companies such as Domtar, Tembec, Norbord, and Abitibi-Consolidated have all become certified to one or another of these three independent, internationally accepted certification processes.

"We are concerned that this policy insinuates that the other certification processes do not result in sustainable forestry practices," explained Wood.

"We know this is not the case and there has been a great deal of effort by local government and industry to ensure that all of Ontario's forests are managed in a sustainable manner. We believe that Minister Gerry Phillips should act immediately to amend this procurement policy. If the Ontario government wants to demonstrate environmental sensitivity, would it not make more sense, and send a better message to Ontarians, to put a policy in place that requires 100% of the government's paper requirements to come from forests certified by one of the three standards they endorse?"

The Timmins Chamber of Commerce represents over 650 businesses and has been The Voice of Business in Timmins since 1949. Its advocacy and policy initiatives focus on ensuring a positive business climate for our members.

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