



Media Release

***For Immediate Release
Monday, May 5, 2008***

Timmins Chamber puts government paper on Ontario Chamber Agenda

Timmins – At their annual general meeting held in Oshawa over the weekend, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) delegates supported a resolution developed by the Timmins Chamber of Commerce “*Creating a fair paper procurement policy in Ontario*”. The provincial chamber will now join the efforts of our local chamber to lobby the Ontario government to amend the newly created paper procurement policy, which causes a competitive disadvantage for some Ontario paper manufacturing companies.

According to President Marilyn Wood, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce is pleased to have garnered the support of the OCC, which represents a collective of over 60,000 members through 160 independent chambers of commerce and boards of trade throughout the province. Wood stated, “Ensuring that the policies at all three levels of government create a healthy business environment is the mandate of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. While this policy was identified by our local chamber, it has implications for paper manufacturing throughout the province, and that is why we requested the support of the OCC to assist us in lobbying the provincial government for change.”

Background

In 2004, David Ramsay, then Minister of Natural Resources (MNR), announced that all Ontario forest companies operating under sustainable forest licenses would have to be certified by 2007 under any of three internationally recognized certification processes: the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). However, in 2007, after these certifications had been completed, the Ministry of Government Services (the ministry in charge of purchasing goods used by the Ontario government) announced a paper procurement policy that gives preference to one certification standard over the other two.

The new government policy states that 30% of all paper purchased by the Ontario government will come from FSC-certified companies only, increasing to 50% by 2012. The province’s paper procurement strategy is in contradiction to the certification requirement of the MNR. Not only does this policy put the majority of Ontario’s forestry companies at a competitive disadvantage because they have been certified through SFI or CSA (and not through FSC), it also insinuates that the SFI or CSA certification processes are somehow inferior, or do not result in sustainable forestry practices.

Timmins Chamber of Commerce, is calling on the Ontario government to immediately amend this contradictory procurement policy, and with the added support of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, is recommending that instead, they adopt a policy requiring their paper be supplied from forests certified by any one of the three standards which MNR previously endorsed.

Wood stated, “The existing policy is like the government telling us that we must all buy energy efficient light bulbs, and then, when we do, they tell us “Oh by the way, half of them must be from GE.”

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About the Timmins Chamber of Commerce

With over 700 members, the Timmins Chamber of Commerce is the largest accredited chamber of commerce with distinction in northeastern Ontario. As the “Voice of Business in Timmins” since 1949, our advocacy and policy initiatives focus on ensuring a positive business climate in the City of Timmins.

