
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
BC Forestry Climate Change Working Group

INDUSTRY PROMOTES CLIMATE BENEFITS OF FOREST PRODUCTS

VANCOUVER – The B.C. forestry industry and Premier Gordon Campbell announced a new initiative today that will raise global awareness around the critical role B.C. forest products can play in the fight against climate change.

B.C.'s forest products store vast amounts of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere and contribute to climate change. Moreover, by using clean wood-based bio-energy in the manufacture of these products – and substituting them for fossil-fuel-intensive alternatives – further reductions in B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions are achieved.

“Our forests are one of the most important allies we have in the battle against climate change. Living forests convert carbon dioxide into oxygen, while sustainable wood products play an important role in sequestering carbon,” said Premier Campbell. “British Columbia is already known around the world as a leader in sustainable forest management and innovative wood products. Through this campaign, we can tap into the growing market for products that are green, sustainable, and carbon-smart.”

“The potential for British Columbia's and our forest industry is immense. One of the most significant carbon reservoirs on the planet exists within our forests, and by keeping them healthy and growing, by prompt regeneration and by continuing to make carbon-storing wood products, we can have a significant positive impact,” said Ric Slaco, Chair of the BC Forestry Climate Change Working Group. “As the world begins to understand this value and the power each of us has to reduce our carbon footprint by choosing wood and paper products from sustainably managed sources, BC has the potential to be the global supplier of choice.”

As part of the awareness campaign, industry leaders will be speaking to communities across the province to help British Columbians understand how they can join BC's forest industry to tackle climate change and make a difference. Working Group members will also be incorporating this message in international marketing activities.

The industry would like consumers to know that they can have a lighter carbon footprint by continuing to recycle paper products (as the carbon is retained in the fibres), while also choosing sustainably managed wood over other building products like steel, concrete or plastic. For example, the carbon stored within an average-sized, wood-frame home is equivalent to one car's greenhouse gas emissions for five years.

As part of the industry's continued efforts to manage its carbon footprint, the industry has established the unprecedented goal of achieving carbon neutrality across all operations and all sectors by 2015 – without the purchase of carbon offset credits.

While the industry has already reduced its footprint substantially since 1990, surpassing Kyoto targets by five times, it believes more is achievable through forest management, the manufacture and use of climate-friendly products and by switching from fossil fuels to wood based bio-energy. And, as one of the largest producers of energy in the province, the potential for the forest industry to produce surplus green energy from wood waste is huge.

The British Columbia Forestry Climate Change Working Group is made up of industry representatives from the pulp and paper, sawmilling and forestry sectors. It has been established to provide information on the vital, ongoing role that BC's forests and forest products will play as all of us strive to reduce the harmful impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. www.bcclimatechange.ca

The B.C. Government is pursuing a goal of zero net deforestation by 2015, and will put that goal into law by 2010. The Province is also launching a new Trees for Tomorrow urban afforestation program which will see millions of new trees planted in public spaces across B.C.

For more information on what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and save money, visit <http://www.livesmartbc.ca/>.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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