

FOR RELEASE
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Canadian Council of Forest Ministers recognize the value of innovation and Indigenous participation in the forest sector

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DAWSON CITY—The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) met today in Dawson City, Yukon to renew its commitment to key challenges and opportunities for Canada's forests and forest sector. During their meeting chaired by the Government of Yukon, the Council agreed to renew the Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy, and discussed the ways in which the forest sector can contribute to Canada's climate change objectives, enhance innovation and industry transformation, encourage greater Indigenous participation in the forest sector and support bioenergy development, and demonstrate sustainable forest management. The Council also discussed the softwood lumber file and reaffirmed the importance of achieving a managed trade agreement with the United States.

Building on the momentum of last year's Innovation Summit, the CCFM representatives released the Council's Innovation Action Plan. Under the pillars of collaboration, engagement and mobilisation, this plan outlines how jurisdictions will work together to better align Canadian bioeconomy initiatives and enhance innovation, in areas such as bioproducts and building with wood, to maximize competitiveness and sustainability in the forest sector.

In recognizing that 70 per cent of Indigenous communities in Canada are located in forested areas, the CCFM will promote and encourage next-generation Indigenous participation in forest industry opportunities. To this end, the Council is once again partnering with the Forest Products Association of Canada to deliver the "Skills Awards for Aboriginal Youth." During this meeting, the CCFM also met with Indigenous representatives to discuss the potential for bioenergy development to provide sustainable economic benefits to communities, with Ministers noting the importance of supporting such activities.

"We all recognize that climate change is impacting remote and northern communities across Canada," said the Honourable Scott Kent, Yukon's Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. "By encouraging the use of forest bio-fuels as an energy source, off-grid communities have the opportunity to not only address environmental impacts and risks associated with fossil fuel transport, storage and consumption, but also make a real economic contribution to local community capacity and economic development by using a sustainable local resource."

In recognition of Canada's stringent forest laws and regulation and its status as a world leader in forest certification, governments across the country remain steadfast in their support for sustainable forest management. To increase awareness about Canada's strong record in sustainable forest practices, the CCFM endorsed a Statement of Cooperation to "Promote Canada's Sustainable Forests and Forest Products" to domestic and international audiences. Through this statement, the CCFM commits to raising awareness within Canada and abroad about the country's sustainable forest management practices and about the many benefits of forests and forest products. The Council also agreed to continue sharing science-based information on the state of Canada's forests.

"This Council provides ministers and forest stakeholders with a valuable opportunity to collaborate in areas such as wildland fire, innovation, and bioenergy development for remote and Indigenous communities. As incoming chair of the Council, I am looking forward to continued discussions with my colleagues on how the forest sector can continue to innovate, create economic opportunities for Indigenous and local communities across the country, and contribute to the fight against climate change," said the Honourable Jim Carr, Canada's Minister of Natural Resources.

The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers was established in 1985 to provide a forum for federal, provincial and territorial governments to work cooperatively to address issues of common interest related to the forest sector. The CCFM provides leadership on national and international issues and sets direction for the stewardship and sustainable management of Canada's forests.

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