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## **CBFA at the House of Commons Committee on Natural Resources**

February 17 2015

Good afternoon.

I'd like to start by thanking you for inviting me to be here today. It's an honour to be able to share with you some of the innovative work that the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement is facilitating as part of the renewal of Canada's forestry industry.

My name is Aran O'Carroll and I'm the Executive Director of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement Secretariat, based here in Ottawa.

I'm sure many of you are familiar with the work of the CBFA, which brings together environmental organizations and forestry companies to work towards a sustainable future for Canada's boreal forests and the jobs and communities that rely on them.

I'd like to introduce two representatives of these organizations who are here in the audience and who are prepared to answer questions following my address: Mr. Mark Hubert, Vice President of Environmental Leadership at the Forest Products Association of Canada, and Ms. Janet Sumner, the senior representative of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association to the CBFA. Both Mr. Hubert and Ms. Sumner are members of the CBFA governing body – the Steering Committee.



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In 2008, Canada's forest industry was in crisis, facing a soaring Canadian dollar, a depressed U.S. housing market, and intensifying global competition.

At that time, this committee held hearings like these, and concluded that industry, governments and other stakeholders needed "to work together to lay the groundwork for the industry's renewal, prosperity and sustainability."

In 2010, the CBFA answered that call to action, as forest industry partners and environmental groups signed on to the most ambitious conservation agreement in the world. But the agreement isn't just about conservation – it's also about the health and sustainability of the forestry industry.

The CBFA recognizes that, although the responsibility for the future of forestry and conservation in Canada's Boreal Forest rests primarily with governments, including Aboriginal governments, both industry and environmentalists have a responsibility to help define that future.

Imagine a future where, as manufacturers of high-end products look for ways to appeal to environmentally-conscious consumers, Canadian forest products are in demand the world over.

The CBFA is a part of that vision – the work we are doing is helping to differentiate the Canadian forestry industry in the global marketplace, by showcasing its world-leading commitment to sustainability.



We are achieving real progress towards that goal – but sometimes we forget the scale and scope of the work being done. The boreal forest is Canada’s largest terrestrial ecosystem, the largest wilderness area on the planet, and more than half a million Canadians depend on a competitive forest industry for their livelihood.

The road to progress involves preserving both of these national treasures and finding ways for them to thrive and endure together, for the sake of conservation and economic prosperity.

As you can imagine, bringing such diverse interests together to work towards a common goal is not always easy – we’ve endured some setbacks, but the agreement has also seen some significant progress:

- In Ontario, the provincial government is working on how to implement our recommendations, which aim to secure the future of the 3 million hectares of caribou range in the Abitibi River Forest of Northeastern Ontario to conserve Boreal woodland caribou and maintain hundreds of jobs in local communities.
- Our Alberta working group has crafted a draft set of recommendations for a Caribou Action Plan for one of the most contested areas in Canada - Northeastern Alberta, ground zero for oil sands operations. The draft recommendations have been shared



with the provincial government, and been the subject of productive discussions with the oil and gas sector.

- In Newfoundland, CBFA participants contributed to the Government's new Forest Management Strategy, which identified significant large forest landscapes — approximately 5 million hectares in size or 47 per cent of the island — to be deferred from harvest. This supports the CBFA's conservation planning work, but at the same time, the commercial forest management area set out in the report creates certainty for economic development and coupled with a progressive, value-added forest development strategy will ensure a new prosperity for Newfoundland forest sector.

We are proud of these developments – under the CBFA, environmentalists and industry leaders are working to support provincial leadership in making the forestry economy sustainable.

This work is contributing to Canada's forestry industry transforming itself from its traditional role as hewers of wood to a truly renewable and responsible source of eco-friendly, high-tech materials, as advances in technology are making wood a desirable material again.

For example, Lincoln Motor Co. has announced a new project, in collaboration with CBFA member Weyerhaeuser and Johnson Controls, to use wood as a sustainable alternative to fiberglass in auto parts. The new



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material is not only more eco-friendly, it's 6 percent lighter than fibreglass. Wood-derived products may even some day replace the petroleum-based resins in this material further expending this significant value-added product stream.

Meanwhile, in the world of fashion, designers are increasingly replacing petroleum-based fabrics with advanced bio-based fabrics like rayon and viscose that can be sourced from wood fibre. In the world of consumer electronics there is the very exciting prospect of wood-derived touch screens displacing non-renewable plastics.

Even neighbourhoods are being transformed, as architects look to a new engineered wood product such as cross-laminated timber, which offers steel-like strength from a renewable source to design ever taller wood-based buildings.

A future where a reinvigorated Canadian forest industry can compete in new and previously unimagined markets on the strength of its celebrated environmental and social credentials is within our reach.

I believe the committee's call for collaboration in the face of the 2008 forestry crisis strikes at the heart of the issue. The CBFA is real evidence of the success that can come from cross-sectoral collaboration and a move from an era of adversarial positions to one based on the joint pursuit of common solutions.



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As our forest industry continues to diversify and revitalize itself, I hope that all stakeholders can work together towards a stronger, more competitive forestry industry and a better protected, more sustainably managed Boreal Forest.

Thank you, and Mr. Hubert, Ms. Sumner and I look forward to your questions.



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