



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-00485**

BY: **Ms. MAY (SAANICH—GULF ISLANDS)**

DATE: **JUNE 13, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE JIM CARR, P.C., M.P.**

Response by the Minister of Natural Resources

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Protection of the environment

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada would like to thank the petitioners for expressing their concerns regarding old growth forests.

Canada's forests are a significant contributor to our economy, environment and climate change objectives, and their sustainability is a priority for the Government.

Canadians can be proud of our forest sector, which is one of the world's leaders in sustainable forest management. Canada has the third-largest forest area on the planet, with 40% of the world's certified forests of which less than 0.3% are harvested annually. Our forests have and continue to present Canada with enormous potential.

Canada's forest sector is one of the most innovative parts of our economy and is positioned to help address three of the major challenges facing our country: combatting climate change, driving innovation, and creating economic opportunities. Canada's forest sector is developing clean technologies, producing green energy, and reducing its need for energy and water and lowering both emissions and waste. While Canada's overall greenhouse gas emissions were rising between 1990 and 2012, pulp and paper mills reduced their emissions by an impressive 66%.

Across the country, the government has established an extensive and rigorous system of forest governance which supports Canada's international reputation as a trusted source of legally and sustainably obtained forest products. In

fact, when the world looks for leading-edge sustainable forest management practices, it turns to Canada. In Canada, the majority of the forested land base falls under provincial jurisdiction, as defined in the Constitution. As a result, the development and implementation of land management policies that guide forest activities on provincial Crown Land and private forest land lies within the jurisdictional purview of the provinces. In British Columbia the province owns about 96% of the forested land base.

At a national level, Canada's national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas are models of environmental stewardship and important legacies to be preserved for future generations. For example, on the west coast of British Columbia, Pacific Rim National Park and Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve demonstrate the federal government's commitment to developing a network of national parks representing Canada's unique ecosystems and the long-term goal to establish at least one national park in each of Canada's terrestrial regions. For more information on the federal government's role and the creation of new national parks, please visit the Parks Canada website at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/np-pn/cnpr-cnnp/index.aspx>.

In addition, forest ecosystems face considerable challenges and pressures from the forces of change. Science and the policy it informs are important aspects to ensuring the long-term viability of our nation's forests. The Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada is a world leader in providing the science related to sustainable forest management. The Canadian Forest Service is engaged in several areas of work that support and inform provincial initiatives to conserve old-growth forests, such as forest carbon accounting, cumulative effects research, and research on how to manage forests for resilience to pests, disease and wildfire. Much of this work is done in collaboration with provincial and territorial forest management agencies. Additionally, the Canadian Forest Service produces an annual State of Canada's Forests report, which provides a national snapshot of the social, economic and environmental status of forests and forestry in Canada, including reporting on key sustainability indicators.

Information on challenges to Canada's forest ecosystems and the science being employed to respond to these challenges is available on the department's website at <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/about/17545>.