

July 21, 2025

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., O.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
mark.carney@parl.gc.ca

Prime Minister Carney,

Re: Supporting Canada's Forestry Sector and Communities

I am writing to request urgent action to support Canada's forestry sector, forestry workers, and the hundreds of forestry-dependent rural communities across Canada.

Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 320,000 members across the country, working in every major sector of the Canadian economy. Unifor is also Canada's forestry union, with 24,000 members spread across 10 Canadian provinces. Unifor's members work in a variety of forestry, logging and firefighting occupations as well as wood product, bioenergy and pulp and paper manufacturing facilities.

The Poly-Crisis in Canada's Forestry Sector

Our members know first-hand that Canada's forestry sector continues to experience a perfect storm of repeated and intersecting crises, and a combination of economic, environmental, and global challenges continues to destabilize the broader sector.

The ongoing softwood lumber dispute and the threat of further tariffs have intensified a trade war that are causing disastrous repercussions across the forestry sector. Earlier this year, the United States Department of Commerce raised combined preliminary softwood duties on Canadian softwood lumber to 34.45%. In March 2025, the White House announced a so-called Section 232 investigation to determine the effects on national security of imports of timber, lumber and their derivative products. Depending on the findings of that investigation, we could see tariffs on these products starting in November. These potential tariffs would be on top of the already unacceptable 34.45% softwood duties, and would create an immediate financial crisis in the sector.

Every season, wildfires pose a serious threat to our forests, forestry operations, and communities that depend on forestry. Important conservation measures, including species and habitat protection efforts, continue to complicate long-term planning for the sector. Volatile prices are still making companies think twice about investments, and new

EU regulations could negatively impact the ability of Canadian forest products to be sold in that market and around the world.

Given this range of diverse crises – and since there are both common, national-level challenges as well as regionally-specific ones – Unifor has been calling for a much more coordinated, strategic response developed by, and with the active participation of, all levels of government, forestry workers and their union, Indigenous communities, forestry employers and industry groups, forestry training and education institutions, and local communities.

An Expanded National Homebuilding Strategy

Unifor has already proposed the creation of a National Homebuilding Strategy that better connects Canadian forests and wood products with residential construction, with the goal of addressing Canada's housing crisis while supporting a sustainable, value-added forestry industry.

Our proposal would build off the federal government's *Canada's Housing Plan* but tie it further back up the supply chain to include the harvesting, milling, and fabrication of Canadian-sourced and manufactured wood and engineered wood products. The goal is to create more value-added economic activity here in Canada, providing good jobs for forestry workers – while also building a domestic market for innovative engineered wood products to be used in modular housing construction, which would ramp up housing supply and promote affordability.

A Broader National Forestry Strategy

A broader national forestry strategy would engage all the major stakeholders identified above, to guide the creation and implementation of a powerful sector strategy to build a sustainable future for Canada's forest industries, the well-paying union jobs that they support, and the forestry communities in which they operate.

On a country-wide scale, all levels of government must work together to provide income supports to forestry workers who have been impacted by closures and curtailments driven by the softwood lumber dispute, the tariff threat, or other macro-economic shocks. In some cases, to “keep producers producing, and workers working,” the federal and provincial governments must be prepared to provide liquidity supports to forestry employers who are facing short-term financial headwinds due to the ongoing poly-crisis in the sector.

A broader national forestry strategy would also be helpful in terms of coordinating a Canada-wide approach to the promotion and prioritization of forest bioenergy projects, supports for critical forestry infrastructure like forestry roads, and the development of new domestic and foreign markets for Canada's forest products.

Regional and Provincial Flexibility

Approximately 12,000 of Unifor's forestry members live and work in Quebec, with around 4,000 each in Ontario and Atlantic Canada, and 3,000 forestry members in BC. Our rank-and-file members and elected leaders across the country are well aware of the regionally specific challenges and contexts, and – thanks to the work of Unifor's Forestry Council – we also have the opportunity to work together to develop national strategies and recommendations for the sector.

As already noted, a comprehensive national forestry strategy must include regional flexibility, since issues like species and habitat conservation, wildfire risk and impact, fibre supply, access to overseas markets, energy costs, and the labour market can vary widely from province to province and region to region.

A Comprehensive and Coordinated Plan for the Future

As Canada's forestry sector and forestry workers confront the ongoing poly-crisis, it is critical the governments and other stakeholders work together in coordination. Regional- and provincial-level policies and regimes are necessary, but not sufficient to address the challenges that face the sector. Simply put, a patchwork or piecemeal approach won't work – all three levels of government must work with other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and coordinated national-level plan that respects and addresses regionally-specific issues.

I look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss these proposals in more detail. Canada's forestry sector, and especially its forestry workers and communities, cannot afford to wait any longer.

Sincerely,



Lana Payne
National President
/klcope343



Daniel Cloutier
Quebec Director