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For Immediate Release

Aug. 15, 2012

Committee recommends measures to increase timber supply

VICTORIA – The Special Committee on Timber Supply today released its unanimous report making 22 recommendations to increase the supply and value of mid-term timber and to strengthen future forest management in the B.C. Central Interior. This region of the province has been hit hard by the current mountain pine beetle epidemic that has killed 53 per cent of the total pine volume on the timber harvesting land base.

The committee held public hearings in 15 Interior communities and Vancouver, and received input from First Nations, local government, key stakeholders and the public. During its six-week consultation period, the committee received 650 submissions.

Based on the public input received, the committee framed its recommendations within the broad context of future forest management in British Columbia. Its recommendations to increase mid-term timber supply focus on:

- engaging local communities and First Nations in future plans;
- finding ways to grow more fibre and maximize its value, by utilizing marginally economic stands and/or investing in fertilization; and
- increasing the type and form of area-based tenures to support enhanced levels of forest stewardship and private sector forest investment.

The committee also considered carefully the requests for an early decision to be made on the timber supply to help facilitate the rebuilding of the Burns Lake mill destroyed by fire in January 2012. The committee's recommendation outlines steps for government to facilitate the economic recovery effort.

“Our report aims to strengthen future timber supply and forestry-dependent communities throughout the Central Interior,” said committee chair John Rustad. “Our recommendations provide steps to move forward with a response for the Lakes timber supply area, while providing a path for minimizing the decline in timber supply created by the mountain pine beetle epidemic.”

“The report reflects the importance of working with local communities to preserve the integrity of British Columbia's sustainable forest management system,” said committee deputy chair Norm Macdonald. “Management of the forest land base must balance the harvesting of timber with environmental and social values and maintain certification standards.”

For more information on the consultation process and to view the report, visit the committee's website at: www.leg.bc.ca/timbercommittee/

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The members of the Special Committee on Timber Supply are:

John Rustad, MLA (Nechako Lakes), Chair;
Norm Macdonald, MLA (Columbia River-
Revelstoke), Deputy Chair;
Harry Bains, MLA (Surrey-Newton);

Donna Barnett, MLA (Cariboo-Chilcotin);
Eric Foster, MLA (Vernon-Monashee);
Bill Routley, MLA (Cowichan Valley);
Ben Stewart, MLA (Westside-Kelowna)

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