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## NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier

### **PREMIER ANNOUNCES NEW FORESTRY MEASURES**

VANCOUVER – The Province will appoint a Working Roundtable on Forestry, conduct a review of government’s forest regulations and provide new financial supports for forestry workers, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today in his speech to the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Truck Loggers Association Convention.

“We are going to work with industry, with communities, with labour and with other stakeholders to find mitigation and adaptation strategies that will ensure our forest industry survives and thrives in the decades to come,” said Campbell. “Global warming, the pine beetle epidemic and increasing economic pressures are the kinds of challenges the Working Roundtable on Forestry will address. Together, we will ensure a strong, vibrant, sustainable forest industry in British Columbia for this generation, and for future generations.”

The Working Roundtable on Forestry will be chaired by Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman and include the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Pat Bell, rural MLAs, forest industry representatives, including the TLA, First Nations, academics, organized labour, and environmental organizations.

The roundtable will undertake an exhaustive review of all facets of the forest industry and report quarterly to cabinet on ways to expedite workable improvements in that industry. It will meet in communities across British Columbia. The make-up of the roundtable will be announced within the next few weeks, along with its specific terms of reference.

“Forestry in British Columbia is a critically important industry, creating jobs and driving the economies in communities across the province,” said Campbell. “This working roundtable will be charged with recommending a comprehensive, fiscally viable strategy aimed at making our forest industry the most competitive, successful and productive it can possibly be.”

Along with the formation of the Working Roundtable on Forestry, Premier Campbell announced that government will work with labour and industry to provide help towards workers through the current restructuring.

- The Province will launch a full regulatory review of the Ministry of Forests and Range to streamline and reduce unnecessary red tape, cut processing time, and eliminate unnecessary cost burdens resulting from regulation. The Province is allocating \$1 million for this review to be conducted in consultation with industry within the next 90 days.
- The Province will work with industry and labour representatives to develop new opportunities for older workers to bridge to retirement from the workforce if they wish.

- The Province will work with industry and labour to provide for training, skills and educational upgrades, for workers who are temporarily laid off, through new tuition fee assistance programs. Eligible courses will be determined by a committee made up of industry, organized labour, and the Ministry of Economic Development.

Training, skills and educational upgrades as well as retirement opportunities will be funded through the federal government's recently-announced \$1-billion Community Development Trust, of which B.C. will receive about \$129 million.

This builds on other assistance programs that have been made available to the coastal forest industry, workers and communities such as the \$133-million Forest Revitalization Trust; \$120-million Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative (CIII); \$35-million Coast Sustainability Trust and the \$50-million Island Coastal Economic Trust.

Media        Dale Steeves  
contact:     Director of Communications  
                 Office of the Premier  
                 250 387-6605

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