



Environment,
Energy and
Climate Action

Environnement,
Énergie et
Action climatique



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18 January 2023

To: Members of the Emergency Forestry Task Force

Dick Arsenault	Wanson Hemphill
Reg Conohan	Matt Hughes
John Costello	Bianca McGregor
Lori Haslett	JoAnn Pineau

Dear Task Force Members:

Nearly four months ago, post-tropical storm Fiona significantly impacted our forests. My Department put out a call to you to aid us in putting together a plan to help woodlot owners and the entire forest industry quickly salvage as much damaged wood as possible and to use that wood in the best way possible. In a very short time, the Task Force was able to analyze the situation and come up with a wide-ranging series of practical recommendations. I sincerely thank you for this.

With respect to your recommendations, I am pleased to report the following:

- Post-hurricane satellite imagery has been acquired at a resolution high enough to allow us to use the 2020 aerial photos as the pre-hurricane imagery for analysis. We expect to have the satellite imagery in hand later this month, and analysis complete in March.
- We are continuing discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Land on amending the building code regulations.
- We are in the process of organizing chainsaw safety courses for woodlot owners and others.
- We have added the salvage, float and access incentives to the Forest Enhancement Program.
- We will prioritize salvage applicants under the FEP where necessary.
- We are moving to repeal the Forest Renewal Program Regulations (the checkoff fee).
- We are updating our fire risk mapping and will be rolling out forest fire prevention information this spring.
- Forest contractors will be invited to participate in forest fire suppression training.
- We have adopted the *Interim Guidelines for Mechanical Harvesting in Fiona-damaged Buffers*, and this topic will be part of our discussions with the PEI Watershed Alliance about their needs following Fiona.

Finding new markets for under-used species and addressing the labour shortage are both important issues that we will work on, but progress will be measured in months rather than weeks.

We are preparing for the next stage of our post-Fiona response, which will include creation of a Forestry Commission to aid with public consultations and longer-term planning. This new group will need additional skill sets, including public policy, climate change, research science, and indigenous knowledge, as well as sustainable forest management. To balance the need for expanded expertise while keeping the Commission to a manageable size, we are not able to accommodate all Task Force members on the Commission. That said, there will be able opportunity for each of you to inform the Commission and participate in public and sector-specific meetings. I encourage you to do so.

I thank you sincerely for your participation on the Task Force. Woodlot owners and participants in the forest industry will benefit greatly from your sound advice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Myers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon. Steven Myers
Minister

cc: Kate MacQuarrie