

Supporting Alberta's Forest Sector through COVID-19

Alberta has a competitive forest sector that plays a key role in supporting rural communities, maintaining the economic success of the province and sustaining a healthy forest. Forestry is Alberta's third largest resource industry and the sector directly employs 18,700 hard-working Albertans and indirectly supports an additional 25,000 jobs.

Forestry: an essential service

Alberta deemed the services that the forest sector provides as essential to the province during the COVID-19 pandemic. The forest industry in Alberta ensures the global continuity of supply of forestry products, which is vital to the lives of Albertans. In addition to the number of daily essentials, the production of equipment and materials to protect from exposure to COVID-19, such as masks and cleaning products, also relies on forest products.

We heard you

We held regular industry town halls that started at the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency and continued throughout. We listened to your concerns and used what we learned from you to form the basis for our actions.

We developed key initiatives to support industry and help mitigate potential economic impacts. The initiatives were implemented to provide positive outcomes for how COVID-19 would affect the way you do business and give you the flexibility you need to keep Albertans employed. Together, these initiatives will help ensure forest companies can continue operating and enable a rapid economic recovery while keeping hundreds of hard-working Albertans on the job.

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Key response initiatives

Deferral of Timber Dues

Alberta was one of the first provinces to defer timber dues in response to the short-term pressures of COVID-19. The six-month deferral directly supported cash flows and provided forest companies with short-term relief to economic risks and market fluctuations.

Deferral of Holding and Protection Charges

We are now extending our support to include Holding and Protection charges. Starting immediately, a six-month deferral of holding and protection charges will apply to charges due for payment between April 1 and September 30, 2020. The six-month deferral of these charges also support industry short-term cash flows to address liquidity concerns.

Extending ARIS Reporting Deadlines

We've now extended the Alberta Reforestation Information System (ARIS) reporting deadline from May 15 to June 30, 2020. We want to give forest companies relief from administrative timelines to provide some added flexibility for allocating business time and resources.

Continued commitment

Alberta's forest industry is a key driver of the province's economy and our government will continue to support forest companies to ensure hard-working Albertans have good-paying jobs. Supporting the forest industry is one of our government's platform commitments and we will continue to be a champion of Alberta's forests.

We've remained focused on this commitment, especially during these unprecedented times.

On May 4, we announced the Forest Jobs Action Plan to increase access to fibre. We will remain focused on supporting the industry in the future as well. As a renewable resource sector, forestry is and will continue to be critical for Alberta's long-term economic recovery and can fulfill the increasing consumer preferences for green and ethical products.



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