

Response: ?Assessing the risk of doing nothing?

To the Editor,

The Ontario Forest Industries Association is the provincial trade association representing Ontario's forest sector. For 75 years, OFIA has represented forestry companies ranging from multinational corporations, to family-owned businesses that operate across Ontario. The forestry community is deeply rooted in every region of Ontario and has been connecting and supporting families for over 150 years. Today, Ontario's forest sector directly supports 57,000 men and women across the province.

Our sector has received an overwhelming amount of support from municipalities, chambers of commerce, and First Nations in order to develop balanced and evidence-based government policy. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Kathryn McGarry, for her commitment to a better understanding of the impacts of climate change, the cumulative effects of all activity on a broad, dynamic landscape and a better appreciation of the socio-economic implications of provincial species at risk policy.

Our world-class sustainable forest management program has served Ontario well by protecting, conserving, and managing all species, including species at risk. The current Section 55 Rules in Regulation mechanism, or the 'exemption regulation,' that Ontario's forest sector currently operates under does not provide an exemption from managing species at risk. In fact, there are currently very specific and onerous rules that forest managers must follow in order to protect species at risk, including the Blanding's turtle, Massasauga rattlesnake and the woodland caribou. None of these species, however, are 'on the brink of extinction.'

Central to our concern has been the lack of consultation with municipalities and First Nations, the need to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, the effects of climate change on species at risk, and the livelihood of 57,000 people and their families directly employed by the sector in Ontario. Regardless of what activists might think, sustainability has three pillars: social, economic, and environmental. I strongly believe forestry, as currently practised in Ontario, is society's best example of sustainable development. I would also like to thank members of Bancroft council for considering passing a resolution in support of our sector and realize that our concern is the sustainability of our Crown forests. Let's keep people working in our most green and renewable sector 'forestry.

Ian Dunn, RPF

Ontario Forest Industries Association