

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a tree trunk, showing the concentric growth rings of the wood. The image is split vertically: the left half is an orange-tinted version of the wood grain, and the right half is a teal-tinted version. The text is overlaid on the orange section.

# ROOM TO GROW

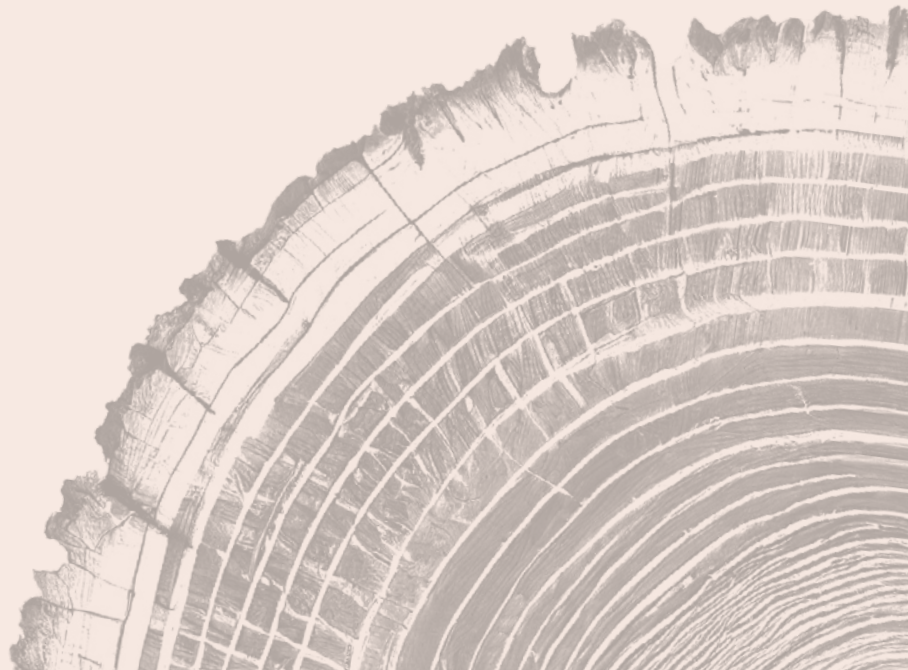
THE ONTARIO NDP'S  
FORESTRY STRATEGY

Good jobs  
Affordable homes  
Strong communities

ONTARIO  
**NDP**  **NDP**

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**Forestry is a strategically important industry, creating thousands of jobs, driving demand across industries, contributing billions in public revenue, and supporting a socially responsible economy.**

Forestry holds special importance for Northern Ontario. Not only through sustainable economic development, but also by supporting communities, protecting ecosystems, and leveraging the knowledge and expertise of foresters to manage our forests. In managing our wood supply, foresters stabilize the broader forestry sector and mills, supporting one of the region's most vital industries.

The pressures to modernize and adapt present a unique opportunity for Ontario to assert economic sovereignty, grow value-added manufacturing, and expand international trade in sustainably sourced forest products.



# RESPONDING TO US TARIFFS

The United States is Ontario's most important forestry market. Strategically located, with high demand from U.S. homebuilders, and historically positive international relations have shaped the industry with [97% of Ontario's forest products are exported to the United States](#). The 25% increase in duties, raising the effective tariff rate to 45%, has exposed and intensified an existing crisis in the sector.

Forest management is long-term and highly regulated, requiring certainty to deliver on 10-year plans and 150-year harvest cycles.

The sector includes woodland operations, saw and pulp manufacturing, and bio-energy production, all mutually reliant on others to sustain the broader supply chain. Disruptions at any point of this intricate chain threaten the entire sector. The Ontario Forestry Industries Association has repeatedly warned a nearly 50% total tariff rate creates a sectoral loss of [CAD \\$2 billion/ per year](#). Despite the repeated calls for support to sustain the sector, forestry has been excluded from the Ford Government's economic response to aggressive US tariffs.



# JOBS: AN ECONOMIC ARGUMENT FOR FORESTRY

## Forestry is a [major contributor to Ontario's economy](#).

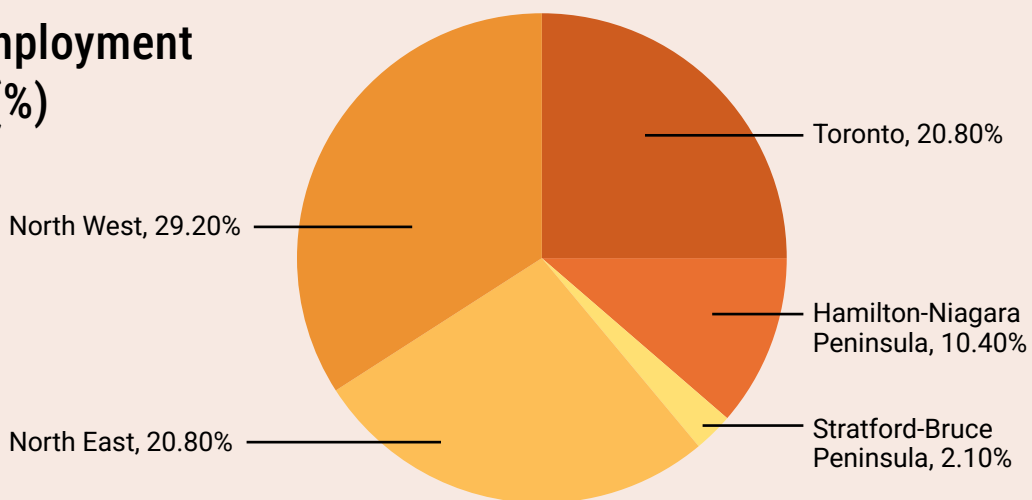
In 2019, the sector contributed \$10.7 billion to provincial GDP and generated \$6.1 billion in labour income. Forestry created 41,070 jobs directly and supported a total of 86,180 jobs across the economy, of which 20,000 or 23%, in Northern Ontario.

Within the forestry sector itself, employment is heavily concentrated in the North (50% of the workforce), though urban centers remain important; Toronto alone accounts for 20.8% of sectoral work. Forestry

careers are stable and well-paid: part-time work is rare, representing just 2.1% of the sector's workforce, in contrast to 17.3% across all provincial industries. These careers support families, create a consumer base for local businesses, and stabilize regional economies.

Forestry stimulates economic activity in other sectors: [39% of jobs](#) in transportation, energy, and construction sectors relying on forestry inputs. The sector also generates [\\$3.3 billion](#) in public revenue from various tax streams including stumpage fees, funding critical services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

### Forestry Employment By Region (%)





# SUSTAINABILITY: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY

Since 2018, the Ford government has overseen declining timber harvesting, averaging [only about half of the total allowable cut](#). Chronic under-harvesting reduces jobs, mill capacity, value-added production, and regional economic activity – despite the availability of sustainably sourced forest product. Under-harvesting weakens the system designed to sustain both ecological health and Northern economies. Forest management is important for reducing the risk and intensity of forest fires, harvesting, and replenishing growth, while balancing habitat considerations at the landscape level.

Mill closures have left thousands of Ontarians out of work, driven in part by the long-term decline of traditional pulp and paper products. As demand for newsprint falls and mills close, we lose more than just local jobs; we erode the province's

foundational operational capacity. Pulp mills anchor residual markets, and as this capacity disappears, sawmills curtail production and woodland operators are forced to liquidate specialized equipment and exit the sector. This creates a compounding loss of infrastructure and capacity that permanently diminishes Ontario's ability to harvest, transport, and manufacture for both domestic and international markets. Ultimately, Ontario risks being unable to meet demand, not due to a lack of fiber, but due to the erosion of the systems required to process and deliver it to markets.

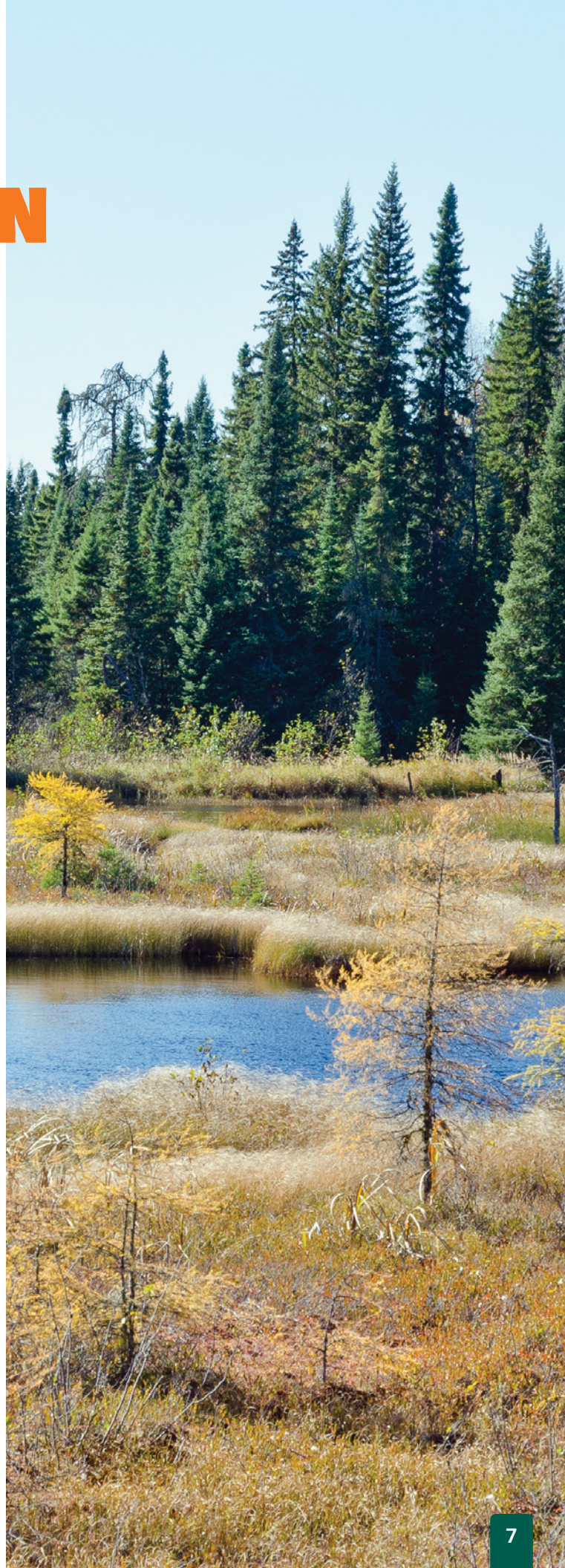
Government and industry leaders must work to transition Ontario's forestry sector towards modern fiber markets, reducing wasted residuals, and strengthening a sustainable forestry system that protects value-added jobs.

# LAND USE COORDINATION

**Northern Ontario has a diverse, resource-based economy, supported by land-use planning. Effective policy requires cross-sector coordination to reflect the interconnected nature of activity on Crown land and avoid unintended impacts.**

Crown land also exists within a broader social and legal context, including Indigenous relationships to the land and constitutionally protected rights. Meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities strengthens decisions and supports shared priorities and economic participation.

Land-use policy must also align with conservation goals, recognizing impacts on supply chains, operations, and regional balance. Ontario should strengthen coordination across Ministries, First Nations, and Municipalities to ensure integrated, transparent decisions that support long-term sustainability.



# ONTARIO NDP FORESTRY STRATEGY

**Building on the Ontario NDP's long standing commitment to a sustainable industrial forestry strategy, this work looks to:**

- 1. Take immediate action** to defend our publicly administered forestry system against American mischaracterizations.
- 2. Defend Ontario jobs.** Strengthen the forestry supply chain by immediately directing provincial agencies to prioritize Ontario forest products in their procurement processes. We must understand the structural interdependency of the forestry sector to inform coherent, long-term policies.
- 3. Strengthen domestic supply chains.** Fast-tracking residential construction and reprioritizing critical infrastructure utilizing Ontario forest products, from lumber to interior finishings can help stabilize high-volume domestic demand. Encourage biomass power as a component for remote mine sites and mineral processing facilities to strengthen residual fibre supply chains could help strengthen supply-chains and improve utilization of residual by-products while managing carbon emission reductions. We will encourage investment and partnerships that stabilize markets and ensure communities and workers benefit from emerging markets. We can leverage forestry to stimulate other sectors and reinforce Ontario's economic sovereignty.
- 4. Lead industrial transformation.** In partnership with sector leaders, leverage Ontario's opportunity to be a national and global leader in forestry. We need to harness this potential and operate with world class standards.
- 5. Promote sustainability and support Indigenous economic participation and sovereignty** through knowledge sharing, ownership and revenue-sharing. Promote sustainability certifications and international alignment, to keep Ontario competitive as global demand grows for responsibly sourced forest products.

# 1. Take immediate action

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- ▶ Defend our publicly administered forestry system against American mischaracterizations. Our system delivers sustainable managed forest products at fair prices ensuring that profits are reinvested into communities and forest management.
- ▶ Provide loan guarantees and duty buybacks to prevent sudden mill closures to preserve productive capacity during market disruptions, with supports conditional on a credible transition plan and tied to clear job security protections for workers.
- ▶ Utilize CUSMA/NAFTA/WTO provisions to challenge unfair tariffs by advocating stable, workers-based agreements on all forestry products including, lumber, and manufactured wood products.
- ▶ Explore new markets for made-in-Ontario products and encourage investment in Ontario with our democratic allies. Strengthen and diversify Ontario's trade relationships by promoting sustainability certifications.

# 2. Defend Ontario Jobs

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- ▶ Enhance Employment Insurance (EI) by lowering accessibility barriers for forestry workers affected by layoffs and curtailments.
- ▶ Provide short-term cash flow support through mill stabilization grants explicitly tied to retain workers.
- ▶ Work with unions to support upskilling: target workers most prone to job losses, to receive training connected to the province's vision for modern residuals markets. (co-gens / kraft pulp / OSB / MDF)
- ▶ Deliver targeted reskilling and upskilling programs aligned with emerging forestry, bioenergy, and value-added manufacturing opportunities.
- ▶ Encourage coordinated planning across lumber, pulp, and energy sectors.
- ▶ Including Ontario Forestry in the *Trusted Partner to your North* campaign, highlighting the lumber as a key material to meet growing housing demands.
- ▶ Expand the [Bridging the Gap Between Ontario's Youth & the Provincial Forest Sector](#) program, to offer forestry education in Ontario to grow interest in the industry.

### 3. Strengthen Domestic Supply Chains

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- ▶ Prioritize local procurement opportunities, by addressing the housing crisis.
- ▶ Homes Ontario presents an opportunity to leverage Ontario's forestry sector to deliver what Ontarians need.
- ▶ Promote the use of Ontario-made forestry products in publicly procured projects including mass-timber building up to 18 stories, and interior finishings including wood fiber insulation and wood manufactured furnishings.
- ▶ Negotiate a federal-provincial MOU to ensure Homes Canada projects in Ontario, are sourced with Ontario lumber.
- ▶ Advocate for forestry as a nation-building sector that provides the materials needed for housing and infrastructure development.
- ▶ Empower industry to invest in Northern infrastructure by adjusting Ontario Forest Access Roads (OFAR) funding to account for inflation since 2018 and indexing it going forward.
- ▶ Use forestry as leverage to support related sectors, construction, transportation, and energy production.
- ▶ Explore Combined Heat and Power within district energy systems to strengthen Northern Ontario's energy self-reliance by utilizing forest biomass and mill residuals to provide dispatchable energy and securing stable and predictable markets for low-grade fiber supply.
- ▶ Support biomass energy development by funding research to define the conditions under which biomass qualifies as a renewable, dispatchable energy source, and by establishing clear criteria to enable biomass producers to participate in competitive energy procurement processes.
- ▶ Ensure inter-government and policy alignment. Ensure all provincial agencies—including those overseeing energy and infrastructure—are empowered and required to prioritize Ontario-made wood and biomass solutions in their procurement and regulatory approvals.

## 4. Lead Industrial Transformation in Partnership with Sector Leaders

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- ▶ Establish a Mills at Risk Task Force to intervene where mills face imminent shutdown. Ensure the inclusion of balanced representation from labour, industry, community, and government ensuring transparent, public-interest decision-making.
- ▶ Work with industry to maximize residual use, by centralizing surplus fiber, analyzing transportation costs and identifying strategic locations for innovation.
- ▶ Recognize the opportunity in forestry to position Ontario as an energy superpower. Support bioenergy as a reliable, feasible, and sustainable means to reach increasing energy demands, with long-term Power Purchase agreements, carbon-intensity regulations, and domestic content requirements.
- ▶ Develop case-by-case solutions, including modernization, diversification, or structured transition plans, prioritizing regional growth and insulating the impacts of job losses. Employ a Build-Own-Operate Model to create conditions for private investment in modern fiber processing and energy-linked infrastructure.
- ▶ Analyze the feasibility for modern fiber production to absorb chip supply and provide value-added products. Identify the capacity and strategic benefits for existing regions to manufacture different modern wood and pulp products using different types of wood and pulp.
- ▶ Invest in biofuels and renewable diesel production. Explore markets for forestry products while leveraging low-carbon policies.



## 5. Promote sustainability and support Indigenous economic participation and sovereignty

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Indigenous ownership and partnerships in Ontario's forestry sector have grown in recent years. Indigenous knowledge and collaboration are critical to protecting and growing Ontario's Forest Sector. Understanding the balance between environmental stewardship, deriving economic livelihood from the forest and acknowledgment of Indigenous and Treaty Rights are foundational to forest management and access to a stable long-term wood supply. Resiliency in the forest sector can be realized through collaborative efforts and partnerships that advance Indigenous participation and recruitment, integrate Indigenous Knowledge and foster mutually beneficial collaboration and partnerships that advance both reconciliation and economic development.

- ▶ Support Indigenous ownership models and revenue-sharing agreements.
- ▶ Ontario forestry must recognize the importance of Indigenous participation and knowledge-sharing and uphold the rights to free, prior, and informed consent.
- ▶ Highlight Ontario's forest product certifications and align with international sustainability policy to remain competitive to capitalize on global demand for responsibly sourced forest products.

