



November 30, 2017

The Honourable Kathleen O'Day Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Room 281, Main Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A1

The Honourable Kathryn McGarry  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Suite 6630, 6th Floor, Whitney Block  
99 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
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Dear Premier Wynne and Minister McGarry,

The Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut forestier du Canada (CIF-IFC) urgently requests that you reconsider the decision to close the Ontario Tree Seed Facility (OTSF) in September 2018.

Since 1923, the OTSF in Angus, Ontario, has contributed an invaluable role in forest regeneration through the processing and storage of tree seed. The seed bank fulfills an irreplaceable role of providing source-identified, genetically adapted native seed for reforestation programs across the province. Facilities such as the OTSF are an essential service to keep Ontario's forest sector competitive and resilient and must remain in public hands.

Ontario's forest industry is a cornerstone of the provincial economy contributing over \$12 billion to the economy and supporting 150,000 direct and indirect jobs. Actively managed forests provide products such as lumber, pulp and paper to advanced technologies of bioproducts are renewable, green and contribute to Canada's transition towards a low-carbon economy.

Forests play an important role in the environment and climate change mitigation by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere, reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing a host of ecosystem services, as well as social and health benefits to communities. The effects of a warming climate are already apparent in Ontario's forests through increased disturbances including disease, insect outbreaks and fires, to changes in plant succession and genetics. Emerging forest adaptation strategies such as assisted migration highly depend on the wise use of seed that is properly stored, tested and recorded in Ontario, all of which the OTSF successfully provides.

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*Voice of Forest Practitioners / La voix des professionnels de la forêt*

**Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut forestier du Canada**

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The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's mandate includes protecting biodiversity while promoting economic opportunities in the resource sector for the public good. The OTSF's highly skilled staff have assisted in protecting Ontario's natural resources and supporting the forest industry by supplying proficient knowledge and best practices. With numerous logistical challenges such as, but not limited to, the lack of expert staff and specialized equipment, the private sector is not in a position to undertake the significant challenge of seed processing and banking within the proposed timeline of one year before closing.

The CIF-IFC is concerned that the decision to close the OTSF was made without public consultation and without analysis of its impacts. The Institute respectfully requests that all actions on the closure of OTSF be put on hold, and that a Stakeholder Committee be constituted immediately to assess alternative and innovative options on the future of the OTSF through a consultative process.

Premier and Minister, please consider the impact of closing the OTSF. The future of Ontario's forests and forestry sector may very well depend on responding to this urgent request with leadership and vision. To echo a quote mentioned by the Forest Gene Conservation Association, "there is no future without forests, and no forests without seed."

Respectfully,

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