

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Provincial Forestry Advisory Council

Feb. 2, 2026

Provincial Forestry Advisory Council final report calls for fundamental shift in forest and land management

VICTORIA – A new independent report from the Provincial Forestry Advisory Council (PFAC) finds that British Columbia’s current forest management system is failing to meet a range of needs, including communities, First Nations, businesses and the environment.

The report concludes that small, incremental reforms are not enough to address the scale of challenges facing the sector.

Titled From Conflict to Care: BC’s Forest Future, the report identifies outdated systems, limited access to trusted public data, and deep structural misalignment as major drivers of ongoing conflict and instability. Decades of layered rules and centralized, top-down decision-making have created a system that lacks the predictability and flexibility needed to respond to today’s ecological, economic, legal and social realities.

“This isn’t about tinkering around the edges or adding more rules,” said Shannon Janzen, co-chair, PFAC. “It’s about rethinking the system as a whole. From Conflict to Care lays out a practical path forward, one that moves beyond elusive short-term fixes toward a system capable of addressing challenges and realizing the opportunities that we actually face.”

At the heart of the report is a shift toward Land Care — moving away from managing forests primarily through timber-harvest targets and toward regionally grounded, area-based decision-making about forests. This approach is designed to improve transparency and predictability, and to better reflect local conditions and regional requirements.

The report notes that the industry is struggling to adapt to declining fibre supply, rising costs and market pressures. While past reforms have added complexity and expense, they have not delivered the long-term stability or transparency communities, First Nations, and businesses need to plan and adapt.

“We heard frustration across the spectrum that the system keeps asking people to endure more process, while delivering less certainty and little change on the ground,” said Garry Merkel, co-chair, PFAC. “This report responds directly to that reality. It sets out a way to move decision-making closer to the land, grounded in transparent information and regional accountability. Stability will not come from preserving the status quo. It will come from changing how the system is built.”

The report highlights this systematic transition as an opportunity to reset relationships, with the land and with people, by supporting place-based approaches that reflect Indigenous Rights and Title, and local knowledge.

Key proposals include creating a transparent, light detection and ranging (LiDAR)-based public forest and ecosystem inventory, and shifting to area-based land management with independent oversight to allow regions to develop co-ordinated plans reflecting local priorities.

The report also outlines pathways to support First Nations in co-designing land management approaches consistent with their governance and responsibilities.

The Provincial Forestry Advisory Council stresses that meaningful change will require co-ordinated and focused implementation. Piecemeal action is unlikely to succeed. From Conflict to Care provides a structured transition toward a more stable, accountable, and responsive land management system, one designed for today's realities and the long-term care of B.C.'s forests.

About the Provincial Forestry Advisory Council (PFAC)

The Provincial Forestry Advisory Council is an independent advisory body established to provide expert, non-partisan guidance on the future of forest policy in British Columbia. Its members bring experience across Indigenous governance, forest management, economics, ecology and public administration.

Learn More:

For more information about PFAC, and to read the full report, From Conflict to Care: BC's Forest Future, visit: <https://pfac.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUNDER

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Provincial Forestry Advisory Council

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Provincial Forestry Advisory Council final report, From Conflict to Care: BC's Forest Future

From Conflict to Care: BC's Forest Future outlines the systemic shifts required to create a positive path forward for forest and land management in British Columbia.

The report introduces four strategic themes:

1. Transparency
2. Regionalized land management
3. Independent oversight
4. Program alignment

Each theme is supported by specific recommendations.

The approach emphasizes that these changes can be achieved by redistributing existing government spending and resources, directing funding away from misaligned initiatives toward building regional capacity, reliable data and more effective, accountable systems.

The four strategic themes have 10 supporting recommendations:

Theme 1: Transparency – Trusted information

To reduce conflict and support credible decision-making, the report recommends establishing an independent, publicly accessible forest ecosystem inventory and usable data system.

- **Recommendation 1: Develop a robust, publicly accessible forest and ecosystem inventory.** The use of LiDAR technology is recommended to produce a high-quality, transparent baseline inventory for all public lands, including parks and protected areas.
- **Recommendation 2: Establish an independent body for data management.** Transfer responsibility for data and inventory to an arm's-length, impartial and expert-driven body to better serve all users, including government ministries.
- **Recommendation 3: Produce an independent high-value old-growth assessment.** An arm's-length assessment (e.g., by the Forest Practices Board) should clarify the current high-value old-growth status and identify potential conservation pathways that do not impact Indigenous decision-making authority, with a focus on the West Coast and Interior temperate rainforests.

Theme 2: Regionalized land management – Area-based approach

A transition to regional forest management areas (RFMAs) is recommended to enable co-ordinated planning that respects Indigenous rights and reflects local priorities.

- **Recommendation 4: Enable regional forest management areas (RFMAs).** Replace or amend existing administrative units (such as Timber Supply Areas) with RFMAs, establishing a single co-ordinating land manager for each area.
- **Recommendation 5: Link management plans to area-based units.** Replacing the static

Timber Supply Review process with dynamic, long-term management plans that connect to on-the-ground management. Annual allowable cuts would result from these comprehensive spatial plans that are responsive to fires and other land-base changes.

- **Recommendation 6: Establish management zones in the wildland urban interface.** The creation of specific zones for communities at risk of wildfire, supported by a community forest resilience fund, is recommended to prioritize risk reduction.

Theme 3: Independent oversight – Sustained progress

To reduce process fatigue and promote continuity, the report recommends creating arm's-length structures that can maintain momentum and co-ordinate efforts across political cycles.

- **Recommendation 7: Establish an independent forest oversight body.** Creating an independent and impartial entity to oversee the transition to regional forest management areas, address barriers, and help ensure long-term actions remain aligned with the report's core principles.
- **Recommendation 8: Build the foundation for new reconciliation pathways.** Collaboration with First Nations to design governance structures that respect Indigenous Rights and Title, tailored to each region, is encouraged.
- **Recommendation 9: Start implementation with on-the-ground trials.** Launching practical, grassroots-driven trials to test and refine area-based management models is recommended prior to provincewide legislative rollout.

Theme 4: Relentless focus and program alignment

The report recommends redirecting efforts and funding away from initiatives that are not aligned with the broader transition to land care.

- **Recommendation 10: Cease unaligned initiatives, starting with BC Timber Sales (BCTS).** Shift BCTS and similar initiatives toward co-ordinated regional area-based land management. Develop a timber pricing system that reflects regional realities, with pricing separate from land-management decisions.

Taken together, these recommendations aim to reduce process fatigue, improve clarity and predictability, and support more stable outcomes for B.C.'s forests, communities, and all who depend on them.

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