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January 17, 2013

To Our Valued Customers:

The Province of British Columbia (BC) values and appreciates our customer's attention to the legality and sustainability of forest products imports. Both our customers and BC share the view that these matters are globally significant, and of central importance to credible importing and manufacturing of forest products around the world.

As the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, I am pleased to confirm that our province's forest policy and enforcement framework is among the world's most comprehensive and rigorous. Most of BC's 55 million hectares of forest land is publicly owned, and is managed to protect the full range of timber and non-timber forest values, ensure reforestation of harvested stands, and address the interests of all British Columbians. BC has forest legislation, regulations and standards that set strict conditions regulating the private companies who are licenced to harvest public forests. Our forest companies have very high compliance with these standards in their planning and practices on the ground.

A 2009 study by the Finnish research company Indufor Oy compared forest regulation and certifications standards in BC and around the world. The study stated that "Canada (British Columbia and Ontario) and Australia (New South Wales) are the countries with the most demanding legislation on the studied elements." The Indufor Oy study reaffirms the fact that BC continues to be a leader in practicing sustainable forest management.

BC's forestry laws are backed by a comprehensive compliance and enforcement regime that involves various provincial and federal agencies including the BC Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. Compliance and enforcement staff inspects harvesting operations throughout the province to ensure that the requirements of our forest laws are met. Providing a further level of assurance, BC also has an independent Forest Practices Board, which audits and reviews all forestry activities on behalf of the public.

Forest companies operating in BC share our commitment to sustainable forest management, demonstrating high levels of compliance with forest practices laws and a world-leading level of third-party forest certifications (CSA, SFI, and FSC). As a result, BC has a very secure forest products supply chain. Our customers can be very confident that their purchases originate from timber that has been harvested according to the laws of British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Thomson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Thomson  
Minister