

December 5th, 2003

Mr. Mike Apsey, Chair
National Forest Strategy Coalition
c/o 2665 East Mall (Room S221)
Vancouver, BC V6T 1W5

Re: Canada Forest Accord

Dear Mike;

The National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) is writing to express support for the National Forest Strategy 2003-2008- A Sustainable Forest: The Canadian Commitment, and to indicate a readiness to begin working with other members of the National Forest Strategy Coalition (NFSC) in advancing the objectives within the National Forest Strategy (NFS). NAFA is of the view that the NFS incorporates appropriate language to address Aboriginal and treaty rights in forest management approaches and embodies principles of respect for Aboriginal Peoples and their distinct historical and legal positions and their connection to the forest. NAFA is pleased to see a new, bolder NFS that unites key members of the forest community under a common vision towards sustainability.

Concerning the Canada Forest Accord, NAFA is unable to sign the version which was developed by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) in June, 2003. NAFA signed the Canada Forest Accord which was presented in May 2003 at the National Forest Congress after making changes to the text regarding Aboriginal Peoples' participation in forest management. What has been proposed by the CCFM in the text of the Canada Forest Accord, June 2003 is not acceptable to NAFA as an Aboriginal organization. The Canada Forest Accord as it stands now is not consistent with the objectives and approaches outlined in the NFS and as a result, NAFA will remain a non-signatory.

To reiterate, NAFA is interested in working within the framework of the NFSC to implement the action items in the NFS. We are particularly interested in working towards the objective of accommodating Aboriginal and treaty rights in the sustainable use of the forest and those action items listed under Theme 3, which

deal with the rights and participation of Aboriginal peoples in forest management.
NAFA looks forward to further deliberations of the NFSC.

Yours truly,

Loraine A. Rekmans
Executive Director

C.c. Andre Rousseau, NFSC Secretariat
C.c. Sylvain Caron, CCFM Secretariat
C.c. Lawrence Ignace, Assembly of First Nations
C.c. Dwight Dorey, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
C.c. Clément Chartier, President, Metis National Council
C.c. Henry Wetelainen, Ontario Metis and Aboriginal Association
C.c. Harley Desjarlais, President, Métis Provincial Council of BC
C.c. Audrey Poitras, President, Métis Nation of Alberta,
C.c. Clem Chartier, President Métis Nation - Saskatchewan,
C.c. David Chartrand, President, Manitoba Métis Federation,
C.c. Tony Belcourt, President, Metis Nation of Ontario
C.c. T.J. Nepinak, Forestry Advisor, West Region Tribal Council