



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Minister of Forests Mandated to Expand BC's Community Forest Program**

*VICTORIA and the Traditional Territory of the Lekwungen Peoples* – In the recently released mandate letter to the Minister of Forests, Premier Eby outlined the provincial goals and expectations which will guide Minister Parmar's work and aspirations during his term. As promised in the BC NDP election campaign, the new mandate letter includes specific direction to expand the community forest program in BC.

"Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following," wrote Eby, including "work to secure a more sustainable future for First Nations and communities that depend on local forests for their economic strength by expanding the community forest program."

Represented provincially by the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA), community forests are long-term, area-based tenures that enable local communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to manage forests for local benefits. BC's 62 community forests vary in size and account for about 4% of the provincial timber harvest. Half of all community forests in BC are held by First Nations or in partnership with First Nations, providing a practical and meaningful way to advance reconciliation.

"For over 20 years, the BCCFA has championed the community forest program, and we are pleased to see support in the form of a mandated commitment from the provincial government," said Randy Spyksma, BCCFA President. "This recognition affirms the vital role community forests play in promoting sustainable forest management, supporting local economies, and fostering strong partnerships with Indigenous and rural communities. We look forward to working collaboratively to ensure the program's expansion meets the needs of current and future community forests across the province."

"We have long had a vision of the future in which the community forest program is expanded across BC to support vibrant rural communities and economies. This is an exciting time for communities throughout the province who are interested in local management of their local forest resources," said Jennifer Gunter, BCCFA Executive Director.

Contact: Carly Dow  
BCCFA, Manager of Communications and Outreach  
(204) 223-6962  
[cdow@bccfa.ca](mailto:cdow@bccfa.ca)

For more information on the BC Community Forest Association visit [www.bccfa.ca](http://www.bccfa.ca)

The Minister of Forests mandate letter can be found here:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/mandate\\_letter\\_ravi\\_parmar.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/premier-cabinet-mlas/minister-letter/mandate_letter_ravi_parmar.pdf)