

British Columbia News

2016 Forestry Asia Trade Mission heads to Japan, China

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/12941>

Thursday, November 24, 2016 10:45 AM

Victoria - Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Minister Steve Thomson is leading a delegation of more than 25 senior executives from B.C.'s forest companies and associations to Japan and China from Nov. 24 to Dec. 3, 2016.

It is Thomson's fifth trade mission to China and Japan as forests minister. China and Japan are respectively B.C.'s second- and third-largest markets for softwood lumber products.

Maintaining and expanding markets, including strengthening key Asian markets, supports the Province's goal of a diverse, globally competitive industry, outlined in Strong Past, Bright Future: A Competitiveness Agenda for B.C.'s Forest Sector.

In Japan, delegates will visit the Tohoku region, and progress made on reconstruction since the 2011 earthquake devastated the region. In 2011, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia and 14 forest companies contributed a total of \$4.6 million to rebuilding key public buildings with Canadian wood products.

Delegates will also tour demonstration projects near Tokyo, meet with key Japanese customers and participate in roundtable discussions with the Japanese industry to build awareness about innovations in wood building systems, including for tall wood buildings such as the mass timber design used in the University of British Columbia's 18-storey Brock Commons.

In China, delegates will stop in Shanghai, Beijing and Nanjing. Delegates will speak at the second annual Sino-Canada Wood Conference and hold discussions with industry executives and government officials on advancing wood design systems. Thomson and senior government and industry officials will also be keynote speakers at the Canada-China Illegal Logging and Trade Roundtable and return to Nanjing to review progress made since a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Jiangsu Province's Ministry of Housing and Urban and Rural Development during the fall 2014 trade mission.

Developing and expanding markets for British Columbia's goods and services are crucial pillars of the BC Jobs Plan. Trade missions are a critical part of B.C.'s strategy to strengthen and diversify international trade and secure new investment, which in turn drives economic activity and job creation throughout the province. Leading annual trade missions to Asia with forest industry representatives is one of Minister Thomson's mandate letter commitments.

Quotes:

Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations –

“Continued expansion of B.C. wood products into markets in Asia is a key action within B.C.'s forest sector competitiveness agenda. Diversification into overseas markets and raising awareness abroad about B.C.'s innovative building products and systems and our leadership in new areas such as taller and larger wood buildings will help sustain jobs in British Columbia.”

Susan Yurkovich, president and CEO, Council of Forest Industries –

“Government and industry have worked hard to expand the overseas markets for B.C. forest products over the last 15 years. China and Japan are our second- and third-largest markets, respectively, and trade missions are a vital part of maintaining relationships in these markets. We are pleased to be part of this year's forestry

trade mission, and look forward to showcasing B.C.'s high-quality wood products and innovative building systems produced from our sustainably managed forests.”

Rick Jeffery, president and CEO, Coast Forest Products Association –

“The Coast Forest Products Association is an enthusiastic participant in the 2016 Forestry Asia Trade Mission with Minister Thomson, industry delegates and Natural Resources Canada. Maintaining and expanding markets overseas is vital to keeping the B.C. forest sector competitive in the global marketplace and to keeping the thousands of well-paying jobs it supports.”

Quick Facts:

- In 2015, China received 21% of B.C.'s softwood lumber exports totalling \$1.14 billion.
- In 2015, Japan received 13% of B.C.'s softwood lumber exports totalling \$760 million.
- In 2015, B.C.'s forest products accounted for 36% of all exports.
- In 2015, B.C.'s forest sector directly supported 65,500 well-paying jobs – more than 140 rural economies depend on it.

Learn More:

Follow the trade mission on Twitter: @BCJobsPlan, #TM2016 and online at:
<http://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/2016-forestry-trade-mission-to-asia>

BC Jobs Plan: www.bcjobsplan.ca

Strong Past, Bright Future: A Competitiveness Agenda for British Columbia's Forest Sector can be found at:
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/competitive-forest-industry

Media Contacts

Media Relations

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Ph. 250 356-5261