

MNR Draft Forestry Sector Strategy EBR Comments

1) Access roads are not only roads to resources, but various user groups frequently use these roads. Unfortunately, the MNR has divested maintenance and upkeep interests to forest sector partners solely in Iroquois Falls. This does not serve the public nor other industrial interests well. In the case of forest fires, access roads not only provide a route to the heart of a fire, they can also provide egress to a community cut off from any other means of escape from an inferno. The rights of all Ontario residents to backcountry sports and recreation opportunities can be cut off by the closure of access roads. Tourist operations can also be greatly diminished when access roads aren't accessible. Cottages and camps can be closed. Options to explore and utilize resources, present and future, can be impacted. The Council of the Town of Iroquois Falls asks that the MNR investigate the divestiture of private partner maintenance allocations and reinvest in our future.

2) Biomass cogeneration and district thermal heating are not new concepts, but they are largely underfunded initiatives. If the MNR wishes to grow the forest sector through use of underutilized species and wishes the use of waste slash, then we would like to see a robust joint initiative take place. Back in 2011, the OPA had a 10 MW maximum generation initiative referred to as the Renewable Energy Standard Offer Program in place to incentivize independent power production, of which biomass cogeneration was a part. The Council of the Town of Iroquois Falls asks that the MNR join ranks with the IESO to devise a new RESOP with a cap of 300 MW per applicant, and that this initiative considers applications from fossil fuel to biomass cogeneration conversion projects.

3) The Northeast Community Network (NeCN) is a group of communities in Northeastern Ontario that have partnered to develop and implement economic development goals regionally. Currently, they have an agricultural initiative to develop thousands of acres of farmland from private land. A lot of this involves clearcutting thousands of acres of forest. Since that seems to be at odds with the MNR's Forest Sector Strategy to grow the forest rather than diminish it, the Council of the Town of Iroquois Falls would like to seek clarification as to how these two initiatives can coexist.