



WILDLANDS LEAGUE
A chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society



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Environmental Organizations Release Joint Position on Softwood Lumber Dispute

OTTAWA – As representatives of Canadian environmental organizations gathered in Ottawa to meet with federal officials today, they released a platform outlining their position on the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber dispute. The NGO Statement puts forward a set of recommendations that would improve public benefits from Canadian forests *and* break the softwood impasse with the United States by addressing key market issues, ensuring protection of wildlife and waters and retaining public control over Canadian forests.

“There is a huge opportunity to use the resolution of the softwood dispute to improve the competitiveness of Canadian industry and enhance public benefits,” said Lisa Matthaus, Forest Policy Analyst with the Sierra Club of British Columbia.

The NGO Statement recommends key policy changes in the following areas:

- 1) Reducing corporate control over forest resources**
- 2) Ensuring full market value is paid for our timber resource**
- 3) Resisting calls for industry compensation for measures to establish real markets**
- 4) Strengthening the raw log export ban**
- 5) Implementing specific environmental protection measures**
- 6) Recognition of Aboriginal Title**

A central feature of these recommendations is to establish real markets for Canadian timber that are fully accessible to value-added processors in Canadian communities that rely on forestry.

“At the heart of the softwood dispute is that the true cost of timber is not reflected in wood prices. This encourages over-cutting and ‘environmental dumping’ of timber products,” said Cliff Wallis, Director, Canadian Nature Federation. “We advocate solutions in Canadians’ interests that also break the impasse.”

On November 13, 2001, 28 environmental organizations wrote to Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew calling on him to allow public interest organizations to have meaningful input into Canada’s position in the softwood lumber negotiations with the United States. While U.S. environmental and community groups are given regular briefings and engage with government trade negotiators in the bilateral efforts to solve the lumber dispute, requests by Canadian groups to meet with trade officials have been rejected by Pettigrew and his department. To date, Minister Pettigrew still refuses to meet with environmental groups on this matter.

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