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## FACTSHEET

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Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource  
Operations

### **FACTSHEET: Government support for forestry-dependent communities**

- Forestry is one of B.C.'s founding industries and a key driver of B.C.'s economy.
- Forestry directly employs about 60,000 people in over 140 communities around the province.
- In B.C.'s Interior, the largest mountain pine beetle infestation in North America's recorded history caused a decline in timber supply. As a result, there is a likelihood of more mill closures in the next five years as companies rationalize their operations.
- Since 2001, the Province has spent \$1 billion on mitigating the economic and environmental impacts of the mountain pine beetle and assisting communities with economic diversification.
- This includes the recently announced four-year \$100 million Rural Dividend designed to help rural communities diversify their economies. Funding of \$25 million per year is available in four categories:
  - community capacity building,
  - workforce development,
  - community and economic development, and
  - business sector development.
- A cross-government team is also working with Interior communities through focused outreach sessions to help communities determine their best future.
- The first session was held in Quesnel in the fall of 2016 to discuss opportunities to be pursued to create jobs and diversify the local economy.
- The \$185 million for the Northern Development Initiative Trust helps northern communities that are currently reliant on the forest industry, to diversify their economies and to date, has invested in more than 2,300 projects that have leveraged other funding to bring \$1.3 billion in new investment to central and northern B.C. in the last 11 years.
- Under the five-year BC Jobs Plan update, a focus on worker education, training and development supports retention of locals in their regional workforce.
- Building on our Rural Advantages: B.C. Rural Economic Development Strategy includes immediate investments and a long-term action plan to support thriving rural communities.
- These investments are expected to support up to 26,600 direct and indirect jobs with an overall impact of \$2.8 billion to provincial GDP.
- The strategy outlines a three-pronged approach that builds, strengthens, and diversifies rural communities. This includes ensuring B.C.'s forest resources are managed to maximize forest jobs in rural communities.
- Supporting that commitment is the \$150 million that government provided to the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C. earlier this year. This is in addition to the \$85 million provided in 2015-16. Over the next five years, these funds will support rehabilitation of damaged forest stands, planting tens of millions of trees and creating more than 3,000

- rural jobs.
- The Rural Economic Development Strategy recognizes that some communities are more vulnerable than others to economic downturn. Currently, Community Transition Teams can provide support for resource-based communities. These supports and services can be quickly mobilized in worker transition, economic diversification planning and social services, and are coordinated with other services provided by the local government and community agencies. Typical provincial services and supports available to impacted workers and communities include:
    - job fairs
    - skills training and career counselling
    - support for families
    - community open house
    - economic diversification strategies
  - Under the B.C. Rural Economic Development Strategy, government has committed another \$1.5 million through the Rapid Response Fund to support short-term skills training to meet urgent, emerging labour market needs in vulnerable communities.

**Learn More:**

B.C.'s Jobs Plan: [www.bcjobsplan.ca](http://www.bcjobsplan.ca)

B.C.'s Rural Economic Development Strategy: <http://bcjobsplan.gov.bc.ca/b-c-s-rural-economic-development-strategy/>

B.C.'s Rural Dividend: [www.gov.bc.ca/ruraldividend](http://www.gov.bc.ca/ruraldividend)

Inventory of Community Economic Development Tools for Rural B.C. Communities: <http://ow.ly/Mpwo308F5Dt>

**Contact:**

Media Relations  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural  
Resource Operations  
250 356-5261

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