



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Resolute Mill Closure

In light of the economic challenges faced by Fort Frances, and the surrounding area due to the recent Resolute mill closure in our community, the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce is extremely frustrated by the recent breakdown in negotiations between Expera and Resolute regarding the purchase of the mill property in Fort Frances. Re-opening the mill operation will create a significant number of badly needed jobs, estimated to be approximately 1000 when direct, indirect, and induced job creation are factored in. Our community needs the support of the Provincial government in helping bring our primary industry back.

The Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce is extremely concerned that if an agreement is not reached soon, and the mill property is not heated over the winter, the asset will be lost for good. This benefits no one. At a minimum, it is imperative that the property be heated over the winter while negotiations are underway, to ensure that the asset continues to retain its economic potential.

Furthermore, we strongly support the establishment of an Enhanced Sustainable Forest License for the Crossroute Forest in relation to the Spruce Pine Fir wood supply that has been traditionally used to supply fiber for the local mill. We believe that local stakeholders should have a greater say regarding the use of the fiber from their local area, to help support local jobs. We also believe that sustainable forest licenses are intended to help support local economic development, and the responsible stewardship of our forests. However, they are not intended to be used to advance the competitive position of one company over another, or to pit the interests of one community against another.

We are deeply concerned that the debate surrounding the issue has been framed in such a way that it pits Fort Frances against our neighboring communities in the Northwest. We recognize that in a global economic environment, we are not simply competing against our neighbors for smaller pieces of a shrinking resource, we need to work together as a region to advance our economic interests. As a Chamber, we strongly support regional economic development, and want to see the communities in our region succeed. Providing this supply of fiber does not necessarily need to come at the expense of other operations in our region. The Provincial government needs to re-think their policies as they relate to the Forest Industry to ensure that they don't pit communities against each other in a competition for resources, especially where there is a sufficient supply.

“We don’t want to see a situation where everyone loses” said Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce President Mark Caron. “Losing the mill as an asset would permanently limit the economic potential of the Town of Fort Frances, and the surrounding communities. Losing the mill for good, would also hurt both companies involved, and make the Provincial Government appear incapable of responding to investment opportunities in the Forestry sector, limiting future opportunities elsewhere in the region. This is not an outcome anyone wants, especially when there is a company interested in buying, and re-opening the facility. We strongly encourage the Provincial Government to do the right thing and take the steps needed to facilitate this transaction so our community has the opportunity to recover.”

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