California, Washington and British Columbia Join Forces on Forest Health and Climate Change

Partnership Aims to Increase Carbon Sequestration and Strengthen Forest Management

California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird, Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz and British Columbia Minister of Forests Doug Donaldson today pledged to share information and work jointly to improve forest resilience and better understand how forests are responding to climatic changes.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed today builds on initial steps taken by California and Washington during the 2018 Global Climate Action Summit in September. With the addition of British Columbia, the stage is set for the three jurisdictions to collaborate on shared challenges including a changing climate, tree mortality, severe wildfire risk and drought.

"Forests are an essential component in the fight against climate change," said Secretary Laird. "Collaborating with other states, and even other countries, allows us to learn from each other and bring innovative solutions online faster than we could on our own."

"The impacts of climate change don't stop at state or national boundaries, and neither can our work. The shared challenges we face are real and imminent," said Commissioner Franz**.** "This agreement lays the groundwork for quick and effective solutions that will make all of our communities, lands and waters more resilient in the face of a changing climate."

"The past two wildfire seasons in British Columbia have clearly demonstrated some of the challenges we're facing with climate change," said Minister Donaldson. "At the same time, I know other jurisdictions are facing similar problems and, now more than ever, there is a need to collaborate on solutions to our changing climate."

As Pacific Coast forests face increased threats due to wildfires, drought, invasive pests and diseases, rural economies are among the first to feel the impacts. A key goal of the MOU is to explore ways to expand the market for forest products and promote investments in natural and working lands that increase carbon sequestration and enhance forest resilience.

The collaboration among California, Washington, and British Columbia involves seven principles:

1. Share and explore innovations in fuel management methods, including prescribed and managed fire, pre-fire management, post-fire restoration, post-treatment monitoring and evaluation, tools and equipment, best practices, and technology to mitigate and lessen the negative effects of increased wildfires and tree mortality.
2. Share and explore innovations in climate-informed reforestation, including strategies for climate-adapted species, genotypes, planting techniques, and ongoing management needs.
3. Share and explore approaches to evaluate and account for changes in forest carbon over time.
4. Share and explore advances in forest-related science and data collection to better understand how forests are responding to changes in climatic conditions.
5. Share and explore innovations in low-carbon emitting, or carbon sequestering, utilization of harvested wood products removed from the forest through timber management or fuels reduction activities.
6. Share and explore incentive mechanisms to reduce conversion of forestland to non-forest uses and promote carbon-rich, climate resilient forests.
7. Share and explore opportunities for investments in natural and working lands that increase carbon sequestration, enhance forest resilience, encourage multi-benefit forest uses, and support natural resource dependent communities.

The three jurisdictions plan to convene a joint summit within a year to develop implementation pathways for each area of the MOU.

The MOU was signed via phone and is available [here](#).

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