

Forests Ontario Tree Planting Expertise Recognized with Multi-Year Federal Funding

Ottawa, ON (June 05, 2019) – Funding for the next stage of Forests Ontario’s tree planting program was announced today by the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, and the office of Minister of Natural Resources, Amarjeet Sohi. This new funding fills the void created after the Ontario government cancelled funding for the 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP) that has operated since 2007.

“Forests Ontario, and the citizens of Ontario, greatly appreciate the federal government’s recognition of the importance of tree planting and the environmental and climate change related benefits that trees provide,” said Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario. “A successful program of this scale requires years of complex planning and financial commitments. This federal funding ensures that the 50 MTP is uninterrupted – we need to plant seeds now in order have seedlings in 2023.”

As well, the federal government’s support rescues the 7.5 million tree seedlings (a three-year supply) that have been stranded in greenhouses as a result of the cancellation of the 50 MTP and subsequent loss of funds.

To date, Forests Ontario and its partners have planted more than 27 million trees as part of the 50 MTP. This work has been accomplished with the assistance of more than 80 partners (such as conservation authorities, stewardship groups, other partners and First Nations). This program has involved over 13,000 landowners and produced over 15,000 hectares of new forest. The 50 MTP also supports more than 300 full-time seasonal rural forestry jobs.

“I want to sincerely thank Minister McKenna and Minister Sohi for demonstrating the leadership and wisdom to support tree planting as a very practical response to climate change,” Keen said. “I would also like to thank Forests Ontario’s loyal partners and the citizens across Canada (including the more than 92,000 people who signed Sambath Kumar’s petition) for their overwhelming support after the 50 MTP was cancelled. This demonstrates that people value and recognize the importance of trees and the benefits they provide – carbon sequestration, protection against flooding and drought, wildlife habitat, and the many other vital services that trees and forests provide.”

Forests Ontario has made a commitment to augment the government’s contributions, through their own fundraising efforts, to support tree planting into the future.

About Forests Ontario

Forests Ontario is a not-for-profit charity dedicated to re-greening the province through the support of forest restoration, stewardship, education and awareness. We promote Canada's greatest natural resource – our forests – because healthy forests sustain healthy communities and healthy economies. Forests Ontario is the voice of our forests. Visit www.forestsontario.ca or follow us @Forests_Ontario to find out more.

For more information, photos, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Minister Catherine McKenna holds a pine seedling rescued from Ferguson Tree Nursery with federal funding, pictured with MP Will Amos



Pictured: Rob Keen (CEO of Forests Ontario), The Honourable Catherine KcKenna (Minister of Environment & Climate Change), Augusta Lipscombe (Communications & Stakeholder Relations Officer, Forests Ontario)