



May 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: ERO# 019-1468 Proposed agricultural land use amendment for Hearst and Kapuskasing

Hearst Forest Management Inc. (HFMI) is the longstanding Sustainable Forest License Holder on the Hearst Forest. Our mandate is the sustainable management of the forest. Being the first coop SFL in Ontario, our management direction is deeply rooted in the science of forestry and consensus-based decision making at the Board of Directors that includes Constance Lake First Nation, the Town of Hearst and the municipality of Mattice-Val Côté with the support of our shareholders: Lecours Lumber Co. Limited, Rayonier Advanced Materials and Columbia Forest Products.

HFMI supports economic diversification and welcomes agricultural initiatives in Northern Ontario that support the long-term health and economic sustainability of Northern communities we are a part of. Regarding the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's proposed changes to amend the land use direction within 5 land use areas to include agriculture as a permitted use, HFMI is submitting comments to ensure that such changes, now and in the future, do not negatively impact forest health and diversity as well as the wood supply of area mills.

Wood that flows from the Hearst Forest supports 525 direct jobs in the mills and woodlands, excluding owner operators, trucking and heavy equipment either dedicated year-round or seasonally to forestry operations. The 4 area mills and biomass facilities in their turn annually contribute to the local economy approximately \$ 36 million in wages and salaries, \$ 34 million in payments to subcontractors and \$ 13 million in purchased goods and services. With consideration for long-term forest health in our region which supports the local and regional economy, HFMI proposes the following criteria apply to any consideration of amendment within land use areas on the Hearst Forest:

- Any consideration of converting productive forest to agriculture be avoided where it will impact wood supply and the objectives of the applicable Forest Management Plan.
- The areas exclude artificially regenerated sites.
- That areas be selected first from land previously cleared for farming.
- The area considered for agriculture be paired with adjacent private land.
- Limit selections to the townships surveyed into lots/concessions and in which concession roads were built. This data is available in the Provinces Forest Resource Inventory.
- Prioritize government effort to coordinate the purchase of individual properties and assemble them into economically farmable parcels before Crown land is disposed of.

No doubt agriculture and forestry will compete for the best land, as the productive clay uplands sought for farming are also the most productive sites with best forest growth. We urge caution and thorough evaluation of impacts before decisions are made to dispose of Crown land.





Should you have questions about the suggested criteria listed above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Desneiges Larose

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