



BCCFA 2026 Conference Notes - Session 7 Minister's Address

Moderator: Jennifer Gunter, Executive Director, BCCFA

Speaker: The Honourable Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests

Session Summary: Conversation with Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar

In a moderated discussion with BCCFA Executive Director Jennifer Gunter, Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar shared his vision for the future of forestry in British Columbia and highlighted the central role community forests will play in that future. The conversation focused on community forest expansion, wildfire resilience, social licence, tenure reform, pricing review, and structural change within the forest sector.

The Minister expressed strong support for community forests, describing them as proven models for local decision-making, reconciliation, sustainable forest management, and community engagement. He emphasized that government intends to continue expanding the Community Forest Program and views community forests as an important part of addressing many of the challenges facing the forestry sector.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the need for long-term structural change in forestry. The Minister signaled support for a gradual shift toward area-based management approaches and suggested that community forests provide an example of how locally driven stewardship models can succeed. He also acknowledged the growing importance of wildfire mitigation, identifying it as a major consideration in future expansion and investment decisions.

The conversation also addressed economic pressures facing the sector, including rising transportation costs, fibre accessibility challenges, low commodity prices, and the complexities of reviewing pricing and stumpage systems. The Minister noted that any pricing review will require balancing government revenue expectations with the broader economic, social, and environmental benefits delivered by community forests.



Throughout the discussion, the Minister repeatedly emphasized the importance of involving community forests in policy development and structural reform, recognizing the BCCFA as a credible source of information and practical experience.

Key Takeaways

- Community forests are viewed as a key part of the future of forestry in British Columbia.
- Government intends to continue expanding the Community Forest Program.
- Community forests are recognized as successful models for reconciliation, local governance, stewardship, and social licence.
- Wildfire mitigation and community resilience are increasingly influencing policy and expansion decisions.
- Significant structural change is being considered within the forest sector, including movement toward area-based management approaches.
- Pricing and stumpage reform remain important but complex policy issues.
- Transportation costs and fibre accessibility continue to challenge forestry operations across the province.
- Government wants community forests actively involved in discussions about pricing, policy, and forestry reform.

Notable Themes

The Minister repeatedly linked community forestry to solutions for some of BC's most pressing forestry challenges, including social licence, wildfire resilience, local economic development, and sustainable forest management. The discussion reinforced the growing



influence of community forests in provincial forestry policy and highlighted opportunities for the BCCFA and its members to play a leadership role in shaping future reforms.

Overall Reflection

The session was both encouraging and strategic. It provided a clear signal that community forests are increasingly seen not as a niche tenure model, but as an important component of broader forestry transformation in British Columbia. The Minister's comments underscored the value of continuing to provide strong data, practical examples, and evidence-based solutions as discussions around expansion, pricing, wildfire resilience, and structural reform move forward.

More Details

Main Topics Discussed:

- Expansion of community forests across BC
- Minister's long-term vision for forestry (100-year horizon)
- Social license and community engagement
- Wildfire mitigation and the role of community forests
- Pricing review and stumpage reform
- BC Timber Sales (BCTS) performance and potential reallocation of areas
- Structural change in the forest sector (shift to area-based tenures)
- PFAC (Provincial Forest Advisory Council) recommendations
- Economic challenges: tariffs, transportation costs, low commodity prices



- Reconciliation and local decision-making
- Government expectations for revenue vs. community forest values

Key Takeaways:

- The Minister is supportive of community forests and sees them as central to the future of BC forestry.
- Government intends to expand community forests, with several approved and more coming.
- Community forests are viewed as models for reconciliation, local decision-making, and sustainable forest management.
- Pricing review is coming, and it may be complex, balancing community benefits with Treasury Board revenue expectations.
- Wildfire mitigation is a major driver for future expansions and funding.
- Structural change is coming: shift from volume-based to area-based tenures, with community forests as the proof-of-concept.
- PFAC recommendations are being reviewed, but full regional governance bodies are unlikely in the short term.
- Transportation costs (+40%) and fiber accessibility are major barriers to harvesting across BC.
- Government wants community forests at the table for pricing, policy, and structural reform.

Action Items:

For Government / Ministry



- Engage BCCFA in the pricing review process.
- Explore reallocating underperforming BCTS areas to community forests.
- Integrate wildfire mitigation into community forest expansion strategy.

For BCCFA / Community Forests

- Continue providing data (indicator survey) to inform pricing review.
- Engage district offices and BCTS regarding potential area transfers.
- Prepare to participate in multi-ministry discussions on structural reform.
- Continue demonstrating social license and stewardship outcomes as leverage in policy conversations.

Questions & Follow-Ups: Record any questions that arise that need further information or clarification.

- Will the province remove areas from underperforming BCTS units and reallocate them to community forests? → Minister: “Yes, *absolutely.*”
- What actions will government take to strengthen existing community forests beyond expansion?
- How will PFAC recommendations be implemented?
- How will pricing decisions account for the full societal value of community forests?
- How will government balance revenue expectations with community forest innovation and reinvestment?
- How will wildfire mitigation be integrated into tenure expansion?



Important Details/Quotes: Capture specific details or quotes that stand out.

“Community forests solve that issue [social license] every day.”

“Community forests bring communities together and allow the identity of that community to help shape the future of forestry.”

“You’re leading the way in the highest quality, most sustainable silviculture practices in the world.”

“This is by far the most complicated work that we are undertaking in the ministry.” (re: pricing review)

“Transportation costs in British Columbia have gone up 40%.”

“We need full structural change in forestry... and we have something unique here in British Columbia in the form of community forests.”

My Thoughts/Observations: Include your own reflections, insights, or questions.

- The Minister is positioning community forests as a political and operational backbone of BC’s forestry future. He repeatedly frames them as the solution to social license, wildfire resilience, and local economic development.
- He is signaling a major policy shift: away from volume-based tenures toward area-based, community-driven models.
- There is tension between Treasury Board revenue expectations and the community forest value model. This will be the hardest policy negotiation.
- BCCFA is positioned as a trusted advisor, not just a stakeholder.



Connections to Other Sessions: Note links between different conference sessions or ideas

Resources Mentioned: Record links, websites, or documents mentioned during the session

- Economic study of the Community Forest Program (the Minister keeps a copy on his desk).
- PFAC Report (Provincial Forest Advisory Council).
- Indicator Survey (BCCFA data for pricing review).
- Bill 14 (legislation related to BCTS).
- Federal forestry structural change initiatives (referenced via Minister Watson).

Feedback/Suggestions: Note any feedback or suggestions you have about the session

The Minister's tone was supportive, and this should be leveraged.

Push for early involvement in pricing review design, not just consultation.

Continue providing strong data, as he repeatedly referenced the importance of evidence for Treasury Board.

Jen did a nice job of both moderating and responding and navigated the camera challenges well.