

CCBAC, MPs meet on Pine beetle

Apr 20 2007

Representatives from the Conservative MP Caucus and the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC) met in Kamloops Friday and found common ground in efforts to mitigate the damage to the region being caused by the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) epidemic.

CCBAC Chair, 100 Mile House Mayor Donna Barnett and manager Keith Dufresne met with several MPs, including MPs Betty Hinton and Minister of Natural Resources Gary Lunn along with senior staff members and others.

CCBAC's presentation focused on three main points. These included the positive financial contribution being made by the Cariboo-Chilcotin region to the province of British Columbia and to Canada along with the need for reinvestment in the region and the need for an economic diversification plan.

The Conservative Caucus members were told CCBAC believes that it is time for the federal, provincial, regional and local governments, and for industry sectors to re-invest in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. CCBAC is currently completing work on a Regional Diversification Plan intended to mitigate the economic and social impacts of the MPB epidemic, and will be making presentations to all levels of government later this year.

CCBAC and the MP Caucus agreed that the forest industry and the forestry dependant communities will undergo change as a result of the MPB epidemic.

Minister Lunn said he is committed to continue to work with CCBAC, understands the need for good economic development planning and acknowledged that the impacted communities are best able to help themselves with the collaboration and support of the federal and provincial partners.

CCBAC Chair Barnett thanked the members of the caucus for meeting with them and for their ongoing support for the Cariboo-Chilcotin region. "I feel the caucus understands the negative impacts of the MPB and are demonstrating their willingness to work in harmony with the region's objectives."

CCBAC and its various working groups are comprised of elected and public representatives from 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, Quesnel, the Cariboo Regional District and First Nations as well as forest industry and conservation sectors.