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November 15, 2017

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, MPP, Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
kwynne.mpp@liberal.ola.org

The Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Suite 6630, 6th Floor, Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley Street West Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3
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**Re: Ontario Needs Government Leadership to Ensure Tree Seed
for Resilient Forests**

Dear Premier and Minister:

I am deeply concerned and disappointed about the August 2017 announcement by the OMNRF that the Ontario Tree Seed Plant is scheduled for closure in September 2018. A facility which played a critical role in forest development for decades, and the long-term reduction in Ontario's capacity to support the positive management of public and private resources. This is particularly disturbing considering the challenges the forests and industry face of accelerating climate change and downstream effects on forest health and productivity and the relatively minimal costs associated with seed plant operations.

I have been a professional forester for over 40 years both in Ontario and Quebec. I am presently a Director of the Forest Gene Conservation Association. I have seen the FGCA letter to you and I support and agree 100 % with their concerns and their requests to you.

I don't need to repeat their entire argument, but I am particularly concerned that this was done;

- with no consultation especially with the experts in this field which the Ministry no longer has,
- without an expert and thorough analysis of the effects of this closure,
- with no plan for a yet undefined 'native tree seed genetic archive' for internal OMNRF science needs, and
- with seeming lack of concern for the 50 Million Tree Program, regeneration on Crown lands and all the repercussions to growers.

In these 40 years I have seen the value of facilities such as a tree seed processing operation; how it supports reforestation efforts in Ontario, how it works to provide processed seed for the multitude of trees and shrubs species in southern Ontario, how it alone has dealt with the processing of rare and uncommon tree species in Ontario. I lived and worked in Québec for 13 years. I saw how the government there operated nurseries and a tree seed processing plant and how they continue to do it.

I have seen the steady erosion of support in the past few years from outdated dated policies, no changes in pricing, no disposing of unneeded facilities on the properties, financial constraints over the years and a lack of interest by Senior Management. All these contributed to a debt that could

have been dealt with. Dollars should not be the only consideration in this closure. It isn't as though government has many other services that cost money.

This closure is further highlights the erosion of interest in the forests of southern Ontario by this government. In this era of unprecedented climate change which this government recognized through numerous programs it does not have the vision to recognize that a tree seed processing plant is a critical part of the adaption to climate change that should remain under public control.

OMNRF management staff have publicly stated that they will work with some clients to address options for their seed processing and banking needs. But little communications have happened, despite the very tight timelines faced by all clients.

Premier and Minister, there is an opportunity for the OMNRF to engage in a proper consultation process that will result in solutions to this urgent challenge; solutions that must involve Government support and oversight, but most importantly leadership, on behalf of all of Ontario. We live in a forest – but there's no forest without seed.

Respectfully,



Terry Schwan, M. Sc., R. P. F.

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