

Council Member Motion

Notice given on: Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Meeting Date Wednesday, April 1, 2026
From Councillor Justice
Subject Fibre Security and Local Forest Jobs

Background

This motion is about people and the future of jobs in our community. The motion responds directly to concerns raised by workers themselves in the context of North Cowichan's Mill Closure Response Working Group.

We've seen real challenges across the forestry sector, including curtailments and closures in Crofton, Chemainus, and other parts of the Island.

These are not abstract issues - they affect workers, families, and the stability of entire communities.

At the centre of this is a simple reality: forestry workers, contractors, and manufacturers rely on a stable and affordable fibre supply. When that supply becomes uncertain, it becomes harder for mills to operate consistently, and that has ripple effects on jobs and investment.

There are, of course, several important factors at play. A declining Crown timber supply, the surplus test, and the role export markets play in supporting the overall system are all part of a complex picture. Those considerations are real and deserve to be acknowledged.

At the same time, there is a concern we are hearing clearly: significant volumes of logs are leaving Vancouver Island without being processed locally. That can represent missed opportunities for value-added manufacturing, local employment, and stronger economic resilience.

So the question before us isn't whether log exports should exist. It's whether the current balance is working as well as it could for our communities.

This motion doesn't propose a ban or a major shift. It simply asks for a review - a thoughtful, evidence-based look at whether current policies are maximizing the benefits of our forest resources for people here at home.

Supporting this motion is a measured and constructive step. It reflects a desire to better understand the issue and to support a strong, resilient forest sector that continues to provide good jobs on the coast

Recommendation

WHEREAS Vancouver Island communities have experienced significant job losses in the forest sector, including curtailments and closures affecting facilities such as the Crofton Pulp and Paper Mill and the Chemainus Sawmill operated by Western Forest Products, with serious economic impacts on workers, families, and rural communities;

AND WHEREAS forestry workers, contractors, and manufacturing employees on Vancouver Island depend on a stable and affordable local fibre supply to sustain family-supporting jobs, resilient rural communities, and the long-term viability of sawmills, pulp and paper operations, and value-added wood manufacturing;

AND WHEREAS significant volumes of raw logs harvested from private managed forest lands continue to be exported without domestic processing, reducing the fibre available to support local manufacturing on Vancouver Island;

AND WHEREAS policies governing Crown timber already prioritize domestic processing, creating an opportunity to strengthen consistency in how fibre resources are managed across the forest sector;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council call on the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to review and strengthen policies including those governing raw log exports from private managed forest lands on Vancouver Island, with the goal of improving fibre availability for domestic processing, supporting value-added wood manufacturing, and sustaining forestry employment in coastal communities.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor be directed to write to the Premier of British Columbia, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Forests, the Minister of International Trade, the local MLA and MP, and any other relevant parties, requesting their support and action to strengthen policies that improve fibre availability for domestic processing and sustain a strong and competitive coastal forest sector.