



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2005FOR0078-000743
Aug. 16, 2005

Ministry of Forests and Range

B.C. SUPPORTS SUSPENSION OF SOFTWOOD TALKS

VICTORIA – Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman today supported the federal government’s decision not to go ahead with meetings with U.S. government officials on Aug. 22 regarding the softwood lumber dispute.

“The ineffective response by the United States to last week’s NAFTA Extraordinary Challenge Committee’s decision leaves us no choice but to cancel the upcoming meeting,” said Coleman. “We fully support the federal government’s decision to suspend these discussions and look forward to continuing to work with the federal government and the provinces to bring a resolution to this long-standing disruption of free trade.”

Coleman added that there are no current plans to restart discussions. Canada and the provinces will continue to monitor the U.S. response before deciding on next steps.

On Aug. 10, the NAFTA Extraordinary Challenge Committee ruled that a NAFTA panel had correctly ruled that the International Trade Commission had incorrectly found that imports of Canadian lumber are threatening to injure the U.S. industry. This should result in the U.S. ceasing to collect duties and providing a full refund of the almost \$5 billion in duties collected to date.

-30-

Media Don McDonald
contact: Communications Director
 Ministry of Forests and Range
 250 387-8486

Visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca for online information and services.