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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **FOREST AGREEMENT STRENGTHENS COASTAL ECONOMY**

POWELL RIVER – A community forest agreement to be issued by the Province will help Powell River strengthen its economy and enable local businesses to sell more wood products in international markets, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

“An agreement like this means smaller-sized forest businesses in Powell River will have more access to local timber, providing them with new opportunities to create jobs,” said Coleman. “This government is fully committed to supporting the forest industry in coastal communities, and this community forest agreement delivers on that commitment.”

The agreement will provide the Powell River Community Forest Corporation with exclusive rights to harvest up to 25,000 cubic metres of timber per year for five years in the Sunshine Coast timber supply area. The community forest is located northeast of Powell River within the Haslam Landscape Unit.

“This is a great opportunity to create and sustain a community forest that will be both economically and environmentally sustainable,” said Powell River Mayor Stewart Alsgard. “The flexible community forest tenure will create opportunities for new businesses and revenue streams such as recreation and tourism that benefit the whole community.”

The Province invited Powell River to apply for a probationary community forest in October 2004 as part of the provincewide timber reallocation process to open up more opportunities in the forest sector. Powell River’s management plan for the tenure is aimed at enhancing recreation and tourism resources while providing opportunities to local operators, mill owners and value-added manufacturers. Powell River considers value-added forestry one of three key investment opportunities since local furniture, flooring, cabinet and specialty cut lumber manufacturers are experiencing increases in production due to expanding markets in the United States and Europe.

Since August 2004, government has provided new or expanded community forest opportunities for 29 communities across the province. These agreements give local governments, community groups and First Nations the opportunity to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources.

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