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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range

### **HOUSTON OFFERED COMMUNITY FOREST OPPORTUNITY**

HOUSTON – The Province has offered the District of Houston a five-year probationary community forest agreement, Dennis MacKAY, MLA for Bulkley Valley-Stikine, announced today on behalf of Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman.

“These agreements are becoming increasingly popular as a method for communities to create local forestry jobs and play a larger role in the management and stewardship of forest resources,” said MacKAY. “The forestry expertise and services that the District of Houston has arranged through a partnership with a major licensee speak to the commitment the District has to ensure the community forest’s success.”

The agreement grants the right to an annual harvest of 20,000 cubic metres of timber on about 14,000 hectares of public forest lands in the Morice timber supply area. The Houston division of Canadian Forest Products Ltd. will provide harvesting and professional forest management services on a contract basis to the District.

“The agreement will offer Houston residents long-term economic and lifestyle benefits,” said Houston Mayor Sharon Smith. “It will create employment in the forestry sector, as well as provide education and business opportunities in the future. In Houston, we are excited about the opportunity to run a community business where one of the end goals is to distribute profits to help non-profit organizations and finance much-needed infrastructure and projects.”

Probationary community forest agreements are a form of legal tenure that enable communities to more fully participate in the stewardship of local Crown forest resources. They are area-based, and give communities exclusive rights to harvest timber, as well as the opportunity to manage forest resources such as timber and botanical forest products, recreation, wildlife, water and scenic viewscapes.

Community forests are intended to stimulate long-term employment, forest-related education and skills training, as well as other social, environmental and economic benefits, while meeting environmental stewardship standards. After an initial term of five years, the agreements may be extended for an additional term of up to five years or replaced with a long-term agreement of not less than 25 years.

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