

New Brunswick chapters defend the forest

May 18, 2014 - 8:15am



Photo by Joan Green.

A 'Rally for Our Forest' took place on Tuesday May 13 at the New Brunswick Legislature in Fredericton. It was endorsed by numerous groups including the Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John chapters of the Council of Canadians.

The rally [demanded](#):

- the province not rewrite the rules that protect the forest for J.D. Irving and other forestry companies
- a forest strategy that respects ecological limits and builds resilient communities and creates meaningful employment
- that woodlot owners and workers be given a viable shot at making a living without having to pack up for Alberta
- Aboriginal treaties and rights be respected.

This spring, a 25-year Crown land forestry agreement between the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and J.D. Irving Ltd. was released.

In the agreement, the province:

- increased the amount of softwood the forestry sector can take from Crown land by 20 per cent

- ended its role as trustee and regulator of the licensed land
- eliminated the role of the public in how Crown lands are managed
- reduced the amount of Crown land that is off-limits to forest operations by 23 per cent.

The Fredericton chapter noted on their [Facebook page](#), "Hundreds of people in Fredericton at Save Our Forest Rally. Great speeches by many on the many reasons why this deal is only good for JDI and BAD for anyone else. This deal needs to be scrapped."

CBC [reported](#), "New Brunswick's new 25-year Crown land forestry contract with J. D. Irving and other big forestry companies brought more than 300 protesters to the legislature building lawn in Fredericton [on May 13]. ...The [Conservation Council of New Brunswick] and other groups involved in this protest plan more protests in the months leading up to the provincial election in September."

On Friday, CBC also [reported](#), "Academics from New Brunswick's four public universities and the Maritime College of Forest Technology are calling on the Alward government to immediately stop implementation of its new Crown forest policy. A new letter, signed by 184 professors and other academics in a wide variety of faculties ranging from arts to mathematics, calls for Natural Resources Minister Paul Robichaud to stop the process and revisit the strategy."

The proposed Forest Management Agreement set to be signed by July 1.