

Alberta Party

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Mandel: “This will dramatically change how we build and support our forestry industry with the creation of a new research institute. By changing how we build we can lead the charge to reduce carbon emissions and unlock a billion dollars of economic growth for our province.”

March 29, 2019 -Edmonton, AB- Alberta Party Leader Stephen Mandel announced this morning a comprehensive plan to boost Alberta’s forestry industry by creating a technology and research institute, changing the building code to allow for tall wood buildings, and investing in education and exports.

“Our forestry industry has huge growth potential for our province and we can take advantage of it with smart government support and rule changes. We should be building more of our great towns and cities with sustainably grown and harvested Alberta lumber. And we should be using cutting-edge research to find new and creative uses for our resources.”

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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Backgrounder

An Alberta Party government will establish a technology development fund focused on forestry resources, make changes to the building code, and enhance exports. This will significantly boost Alberta's forestry industry by enabling a substantial increase in demand for forestry products.

Enable huge new opportunities in wood building construction

- Technology and engineering advances have expanded opportunities to use wood for building construction - allowing for taller buildings. With our vast forests and engineering and construction prowess, Alberta is perfectly positioned to take advantage of these advances.
- Long common in Europe, this building method is rapidly expanding in North America. In 2017, an 18-storey mass timber building was constructed in British Columbia, Brock Commons.
- A mass timber structure requires 80% less energy to produce and requires 85% less carbon to build, compared to a concrete and steel structure. By building Brock Commons using wood instead of concrete, there was a carbon reduction equivalent to taking 500 cars off the road.
- **An Alberta Party government would amend the Alberta Building Code** to allow for tall wood buildings and mandate that all municipalities allow for their construction. We will work with industry to review the building code to encourage the use of wood in a wider variety of situations.
- **All newly built provincially-funded public buildings (provincial, school board, municipal) would be encouraged to maximize the use of advanced wood materials**
- The government would also work in conjunction with post-secondary institutions to establish new training programs. These new programs will train installers and draftspersons to build tall wood buildings, explore the use wood in other innovative building structures, and support primary research into new uses for forest products.

Create the Alberta Forestry Technology and Research Institute (AFTRI)

- **An Alberta Party Government will incorporate a new wholly owned subsidiary of Alberta Innovates and provide funding of \$50 million beginning in 2019-20.**
- The mandate of the AFTRI will be to perform primary research and provide seed funding to industry led projects.
- Industry partnerships will explore advances such as innovative forms of building construction, biomass, and sustainability initiatives. By partnering with industry, AFTRI will unlock R&D worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Drive towards sustainability

- To provide the predictability needed to ensure the forestry industry is able to make necessary long term investments we will work towards securing long term timber rights agreements with the industry that take into account environmental and wildlife concerns.
- An Alberta Party government will ensure a portion of the Renewable Energy auctions are allocated to biomass based projects.

Growing the industry

- An Alberta Party government will launch a province-wide educational campaign among engineers, architects, designers, building trades, and contractors to increase awareness of the opportunities for wood construction.
- We will partner with industry to develop a new export program with a mandate to sell more raw forest products, and advanced forestry products abroad. By becoming a global leader in wood construction, we can increase exports of Alberta's raw forestry products and produce forestry products further up the value chain.
- This multi-pronged approach will result in a substantial increase in the size of Alberta's forestry industry. It is estimated annual economic contribution of the industry would rise from \$7 billion to \$8 billion, creating 6,000 new jobs, and generating over \$100 million in new revenues for the provincial government and municipal governments.

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