

July 30, 2019

Ms. Janet Patterson, Reviewer
Workers' Compensation System Review
PO BOX 97122 Stn Main
Richmond, B.C. V6X 8H3

Via email: Info@wcbreview.ca

RE: Workers' Compensation System Review

I am writing on behalf of the BC Council of Forest Industries (COFI) with respect to the review of the Workers' Compensation system (WorksafeBC) and specifically, the report by Mr. Terry Boygo. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an addendum response to the Employer Community Submission highlighting our concerns with the December 6, 2018 "Balance, Stability, Improvement. Options for the Accident Fund" report.

By way of background, COFI is a forest industry association that represents forest product companies operating across B.C. from the interior to the coast. COFI members produce lumber, pulp and paper, panels and engineered wood products at facilities across the province. All share a commitment to a future based on sustainable forestry and manufacturing practices, innovative product development and employee safety.

COFI was a signatory to the Employer Community Submission to the Workers' Compensation System Review, dated July 19, 2019, and COFI further endorses their July 30, 2019 Addendum. COFI supports the Employer Community's position in its entirety, and highlights that any comprehensive consideration of other compensation issues, which the Reviewer perceives as being "urgent" pursuant to Terms of Reference #1(f), must include a consideration of the cost implications to the B.C. workers' compensation system associated with any potential change to the current compensation or benefit level. In other words, as was the case in the Boygo Report, the theme of "stability" – i.e., maintaining the financial integrity and sustainability of the B.C. workers' compensation system – must be factored into any consideration given to other compensation issues which the Reviewer may perceive as being "urgent".

The forest industry is facing a critical time with high log costs and a reduction in wood supply following the mountain pine beetle devastation and two consecutive years of destructive wildfires. Combined with volatile lumber markets and U.S. tariffs, some operations are simply uneconomic forcing difficult decisions to curtail or close operations. With these current financial pressures on the province's forest sector, and related impacts to workers, families and communities, any changes to the B.C. workers' compensation system must consider the cost implications to employers and must reflect the principles of balance and stability as outlined in the Addendum to the Employer Community Submission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input, and please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Regards,



Mina Laudan
Vice President, Public Affairs