June 22, 2018

Dear Minister McKenna, Premiers Couillard and Notley, and Premier-Designate Ford:

Canada’s boreal forest is an iconic ecosystem. Its immense value includes its cultural significance to Indigenous Peoples and communities across Canada, its rich biodiversity, and its carbon sequestration. Products from this forest make their way into items used around the world every day. As companies that rely on forest products, we look to sustainable sources for our purchasing decisions. If managed with enforceable protections, Canada’s boreal forest could provide us with a responsible option for our products. However, we are concerned by the lack of action by Canada’s federal and provincial governments to protect the habitat of the threatened boreal woodland caribou: a species whose population is in decline, and whose health is considered to be indicative of the overall state of the Canadian boreal ecosystem.\(^1\) **We write to urge you to develop and implement plans in 2018 that would legally protect critical boreal caribou habitat\(^2\)** from degradation.

Companies that use forest materials have a significant stake in ensuring that these materials are harvested responsibly. We are concerned that caribou habitat and boreal

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caribou populations are rapidly declining in Canada.³ Boreal caribou habitat protections would not only safeguard areas used by threatened species; they would have significant benefits for Indigenous Peoples and climate change mitigation, and would protect vulnerable areas of one of the earth's last great intact forests. Moreover, these plans could build on collaborative initiatives that Indigenous Peoples, industry, municipal leaders, and conservation groups have already launched in different parts of the country.⁴

In 2012, following extensive consultations across the country, Canada’s federal government took an important step by asking the country’s provinces and territories to prepare boreal caribou habitat protection plans by October 2017. Last year, major U.S. and international companies urged Canada’s provinces to create these habitat protection plans.⁵ However, the deadline passed without provinces implementing mandatory and enforceable protections for caribou habitat.⁶ To help reassure U.S. and international companies that materials from Canada’s boreal forest have been obtained sustainably and without controversy, we ask you to create and implement boreal caribou habitat protection plans in close partnership with Indigenous Peoples in 2018.

By protecting the boreal caribou, you will conserve critical areas of the boreal ecosystem. Today, provincial decisions to expand logging into new areas threaten both boreal caribou habitat, and some of the last intact traditional territories of many Indigenous Peoples. In addition, much remaining intact boreal caribou habitat overlaps with large carbon stores in the boreal forest;⁷ protecting these areas from widespread industrial degradation would support the forest’s ability to continue acting as a global carbon storehouse. Safeguarding boreal caribou habitat would provide a key opportunity for

Canada’s federal and provincial leaders to support Indigenous-proposed initiatives that would protect species and promote local economic development.⁸

Boreal caribou habitat protection would have extensive benefits for communities and species alike, and we look forward to learning about your implementation of these plans.

Sincerely,

Renaud des Rosiers
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Amy’s Kitchen, Inc.

Christopher Miller
Activism Manager
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Senior Director, Agricultural Policy and Programs
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CC:

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