

24 March 2026

**Hon Nicola Willis**

Minister of Finance

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**Hon Shane Jones**

Minister for Resources

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**Hon Todd McClay**

Minister for Trade and Forestry

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*Tēnā koutou Ministers,*

**Re: Explicit Inclusion of Forestry as a Level 2 Critical Customer**

We are writing on behalf of the New Zealand Forest Owners Association and Forest Industry Contractors Association to emphasise the importance of explicitly including forestry as a Level 2 critical customer in the National Fuel Plan, particularly to support both domestic sawmills and export continuity during periods of fuel, freight, or supply chain disruption.

Forestry is one of New Zealand's most logistics-intensive export sectors, with a high dependence on reliable access to fuel, land transport, shipping services, and port operations. Even short-term disruptions can quickly constrain the movement of logs and forest products, undermine contractual obligations with wood processors, and erode New Zealand's reputation as a dependable trading partner.

Recent volatility in global shipping and fuel markets has underscored this exposure. Where prioritisation decisions are required, the absence of forestry as an explicitly recognised Level 2 critical customer creates uncertainty for exporters, contractors, ports, wood processors, and fuel suppliers alike. This uncertainty limits the sector's ability to plan effectively and increases the risk of avoidable domestic and export disruption at times of national constraint.

Explicit recognition of forestry as a Level 2 critical customer would:

- Maintain the essential raw input for the NZ construction and wood processing sector
- Improve certainty for exporters and logistics providers during fuel or freight disruptions
- Support continuity of log and wood product exports; and
- Align treatment of forestry with its economic significance.

The sector is also managing the ongoing consequences of significant windthrow and storm damage experienced over the past nine months. Recovery operations remain active in several regions and rely on the same fuel and transport inputs required for the supply chains outlined above. Recovery of damaged wood is a timebound activity, if left too long the fallen timber will lose any economic value and shift to be a cost and environmental and health and safety liability. This recovery effort further reinforces the need for clarity and prioritisation to avoid compounding economic, environmental, and safety risks.

Given forestry's contribution to regional employment, export revenue, and supply chain resilience, we consider explicit inclusion as a Level 2 critical customer to be both practical and proportionate.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with Ministers or officials on this matter and to provide additional sector-specific information as required. The Forest Owners Association remains committed to working constructively with government to strengthen export resilience and ensure continuity through periods of disruption.

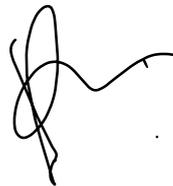
*Ngā mihi nui,*



Dr Elizabeth Heeg

CEO

**Forest Owners Association**



Rowan Struthers

CEO

**Forest Industry Contractors Association**