

CITW Facts by Fax

Highlights

1. Ontario announces tough new measures
2. Quebec introduces new amendments
3. Environmentalists target Alberta's logging industry
4. Waste treatment facility handed back to Alberta government
5. Wood Durability
6. North American Wood Pole Coalition Activity Report
7. Canadian Wood Preservation Association Annual Meeting
8. Canadian Wood Council Semi-Annual Meeting
9. Wood Promotion Network Update
10. Norway introduces new restrictions on wood preservatives

ONTARIO ANNOUNCES TOUGH NEW MEASURES

A new mobile environmental compliance, inspection and enforcement unit will be established in the near future, announced Ontario Environment Minister Dan Newman. Akin to a SWAT team, the group will direct its attention towards finding companies or individuals that systematically or blatantly defy the law by engaging in practices that threaten public health or damage the environment, said Newman.

Plant managers should understand the breadth and limit of the ministry's inspection and investigation powers, says Doug Petrie, an attorney with Willms & Shiers. "Plant managers should identify any compliance issues and establish a due diligence action plan before the SWAT team arrives."

The Ontario government also intends to introduce a bill that will increase the maximum fine for a first conviction of a major environmental offence. Fines for corporations will spiral from \$1 million to \$6 million a day, with subsequent convictions surging from \$2 million to \$10 million per day.

Individuals too will be subjected to new fines. Individuals convicted of a first major environmental offence will face a maximum fine of \$4 million per day, a dramatic increase from \$100,000. Subsequent convictions can lead to fines of up to \$6 million a day, an increase from \$200,000.

It is expected that the new penalties will also apply to the most serious offences under the Drinking Water Protection Regulation, particularly the failure to report samples that exceed standards as well as failure to use minimum levels of treatment.

Industry experts widely perceive the new initiatives as a shift away from accepting voluntary compliance arrangements towards relying on active enforcement.

QUEBEC INTRODUCES NEW AMENDMENTS

Thanks to a new amendment approved by Quebec Environment Minister Paul Begin, environmental impact assessments and reviews will be compulsory in the province for certain projects involving the installation or use of facilities for the heat treatment of soils contaminated by dioxins, furans, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), or other hydrocarbons.

For more information, please contact the Quebec Ministry at Environment at (418) 521-3885 or visit their website at <http://www.gouv.qc.ca/index-en.html>

ENVIRONMENTALISTS TARGET ALBERTA'S LOGGING INDUSTRY

After leading a successful campaign in British Columbia, environmentalists are now targeting Alberta's logging industry, urging U.S. retailers and builders to stop buying lumber from what they call endangered forests.

The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition is asking a dozen American companies, including Home Depot Inc., Lowe's Cos. Inc and 84 Lumber Co., to cease buying lumber from old-growth forests in a 1,040-square-kilometre corner of southwestern Alberta.

The coalition, an umbrella association encompassing more than 300 environmental groups, is pressuring companies to examine their supply chain to determine whether they are buying wood from lumber outfits operating in regions the group claims are "endangered" and "high conservation."

Environmentalists have succeeded in pressuring U.S. firms to phase out buying wood from rain forests along the B.C. coast, a stretch encompassing seven million hectares.

Industry groups, however, along with B.C. government are fighting back. The Council of Forest Industries is working on a campaign to convince foreign customers that B.C.'s forestry industry is sustainable and highly regulated. Meanwhile the B.C. government announced earlier this year a procurement policy that specifically bans wood from B.C.'s central coast.

WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY HANDED BACK TO ALBERTA GOVERNMENT

Canada's only fully integrated hazardous waste treatment facility is being handed back to the Alberta government after the private firm operating the money-losing plant announced it was going to turn off the incinerators by year end.

Bovar Inc., a Calgary-based firm that took over the Swan Hills treatment plant five years ago when the Alberta government privatized it, is handing the facility back to the provincial government because the plant wasn't generating a profit. The plant, which has so far cost Alberta taxpayers \$441 million, will be operated by the government for at least a year while it tries to find a new operator for the facility.

Alberta Environment Minister Halvar Jonson said that the provincial government is now considering broadening the types of industrial and oilfield waste that can be treated at the treatment facility in order to make it financially viable. "We will continue to ensure that hazardous waste is treated safely and we'll keep operating it in the foreseeable future," said Jonson.

The Swan Hills plant received approval in the past to treat waste from other provinces, but experts say the flow of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), the plant's mainstay, has been drying up. PCBs are no longer manufactured in North America.

WOOD DURABILITY

The Canadian Wood Council and Forintek Canada Corporation have launched a joint new web site on building durability, a hot topic in the wake of the leaky B.C. condo fiasco, termite damage in the southern U.S. and problems with exterior insulation systems on the east coast.

The site, durable-wood.com, provides information on such areas as prevention, moisture damage, termite control strategies and wood treatment. It also has information on the science of durability as well as recommended design solutions.

A French-language version of the web site will be launched this December.

The web site can be found at:
www.durable-wood.com

NORTH AMERICAN WOOD POLE COALITION ACTIVITY REPORT

The National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) Subcommittee 5 recently held its meeting in Piscataway, New Jersey -- and it was not without some controversy thanks to a letter written by the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI). The letter, which the North American Wood Pole Coalition received inadvertently, alleged that the Coalition was using inaccurate and misleading statements in exchanges it had with the utility industry. Intended for NESC committee members, the letter aimed to resurrect AISI's position during the NESC meetings.

The Coalition has unequivocally rebutted AISI's claims. The Coalition's response reiterated its concerns that AISI's reliability comparisons are erroneous as it continues uses incorrect strengths for wood poles -- even though steel pole industry representatives have been provided with accurate information on numerous occasions.

The final outcome, however, of the NESC meeting contained no surprises. Steel received a reduction in overload factor in Grade C, the same as wood did. As well, the 60-foot exemption from extreme wind design was retained.

According to CITW environmental coordinator Jocelyn Bougie, the wood pole industry must be prepared to ward off threats stemming from the steel pole industry. "The steel industry is still trying to put bars in our wheels but we are acting together with the Coalition under one voice to fight threats coming from the steel industry."

CANADIAN WOOD PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The 21st annual meeting of the Canadian Wood Preservers Association proved to be a resounding success, replete with interesting presentations that provided a fascinating glimpse on wood preservation news, trends and research activities. Held in downtown Montreal on October 23 and 24, the annual meeting drew over 70 people from across the country.

The keynote address of the conference, whose theme was "Wood is good, and Preserved Wood even better," was given by Kelly McCloskey of the Wood Promotion Network. Among the many engrossing sessions delivered was a presentation on industry perspectives given by CITW member George Kosanovich, president of Stella-Jones Inc. A symposium on the "Treatment of Engineered Wood Products" was also held.

CANADIAN WOOD COUNCIL SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

The semi-annual meeting of the Canadian Wood Council held in Calgary on October 19 and October 20 was a well attended affair. Mary Anne Dalkowski of Timber Specialties Ltd. gave an excellent presentation on wood preservation. Delegates gained a greater understanding of the challenges facing our industry. Product standards and environmental issues were explained to an audience of 50 people. Also in attendance were CITW president Mike Fink, CITW director Paul Dandy and executive director Henry Walthert.

WOOD PROMOTION NETWORK UPDATE

Support from the forest industry continues to grow, with 88 companies representing more than 60% of total North American structural wood production committing so far to support the initiative. As well, more than a hundred forest and wood industry associations in Canada and the U.S. have

been contacted, and most intend to integrate messages from the Wood Promotion Network into their communication strategies.

NORWAY INTRODUCES NEW RESTRICTIONS ON WOOD PRESERVATIVES

In a bid to eliminate childrens' exposures to widely-used wood preservative products, Norway recently introduced new restrictions on the use of wood products impregnated with preservative salts of copper, chrome and arsenic (CCA). The new restrictions will prohibit the use of wood preservatives in kindergarten and playground equipment.

The Nordic country is also in the midst of drafting plans to govern the disposal of creosote treated wood. Incineration will be allowed only in government approved facilities.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Western Wood Preservers Institute

Annual Meeting
November 12-15, 2000
Maui, Hawaii

Construct Canada 2000

November 29-December 1, 2000
Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Toronto, Ontario

Canadian Institute of Treated Wood

Annual General Meeting
April 8-10, 2001
Renaissance Vancouver Hotel
Vancouver, British Columbia

Canadian Wood Council
Annual General Meeting
April 25-26, 2001
Kelowna, British Columbia

Canadian Wood Council
Semi-annual General Meeting
October 18-19, 2001
Montreal, Quebec

*Published by: CITW
202-2141 Thurston Drive
Ottawa, ON K1G 6C9
Tel: 613-737-4337
Fax: 613-247-0540
Email: citw@fox.nstn.ca
Website: www.citw.org*