

## Media Release

### New PCE Report Highlights the Crucial Role of Forests in Climate Adaptation and Environmental Resilience

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) largely endorses the latest report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), “Going with the Grain: Changing Land Uses to Fit a Changing Landscape.” This comprehensive and forward-thinking report underscores the indispensable role of all types of forests—native, plantation, and regenerating—in addressing climate change and enhancing environmental resilience.

The PCE report compellingly argues forests provide more than carbon sequestration; they offer vital ecosystem services such as biodiversity conservation, water regulation, and soil protection. These functions are crucial for the health of our environment and the sustainability of our communities.

NZIF firmly believes New Zealand needs to increase its forest cover across all forest types to meet its environmental and climate goals. Native forests are crucial for preserving biodiversity, plantation forests significantly contribute to the economy and carbon sequestration, and regenerating forests, particularly on degraded lands, enhance landscape resilience and carbon capture.

The report highlights the critical role of New Zealand’s production forests in the circular bio-economy. These forests help reduce emissions through sustainable timber production and the use of forest biomass for energy. They support a renewable resource economy, which is essential for transitioning away from fossil fuels and towards more sustainable practices.

In light of the PCE report’s findings, NZIF strongly opposes any move to remove forestry from the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Forests are fundamental to carbon sequestration, and their inclusion in the ETS is crucial for incentivising sustainable forestry practices and achieving New Zealand’s climate targets. Removing forestry from the ETS would undermine climate mitigation efforts and could lead to increased deforestation and degradation.

NZIF fully supports the report’s call for a landscape approach to land-use planning, integrating forestry with other land uses to meet broader environmental and societal goals. Key policy recommendations include incentivising sustainable forest management practices, protecting existing forests, promoting the restoration of degraded lands, and ensuring forests remain a key component of the ETS.

“Forests are vital to New Zealand’s environmental health and economic sustainability,” said NZIF President James Treadwell. “Simply stated, forests very efficiently remove carbon dioxide from the air and provide the world with oxygen. By expanding our forest cover and maintaining their inclusion in the ETS, we can ensure our forestry sector continues to contribute to carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and the circular bio-economy. The PCE report provides a clear and compelling roadmap for the future, and removing forestry from the ETS would be a step backwards in our fight against climate change.”

NZIF strongly supports most of the recommendations of the PCE report and urges the government to act to implement these strategies. Expanding forest cover and maintaining their inclusion in the ETS are critical steps towards sustainable land management and climate resilience in New Zealand, as well as meeting international climate change commitments.

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**About NZIF:**

The New Zealand Institute of Forestry (NZIF) is a professional body dedicated to fostering the wise management of all of New Zealand's forests and resources. With a commitment to sustainability, education, and advocacy, NZIF supports forestry professionals and promotes practices which benefit both the environment and society.