

## **COUNCIL WELCOMES DEFORESTATION POLICY CHANGE**

The Southern Wood Council is delighted that the Minister of Forestry Jim Anderton is asking officials to explore measures to address the issues of green house gas emissions arising from deforestation, council spokesman Phil Taylor said today.

"This is the best Xmas present the industry could wish for."

In recent years there has been a very rapid drop off in new planting in the region which had been through a planting boom in the 1990's. This planting boom saw many thousands of hectares of Kyoto forest being established by forestry companies and private landholders alike.

Phil Taylor says the recently commissioned Peter Sligh Consulting Ltd study showed that despite heavy on-processing of timber in the region, the industry provides more climate change benefits than impacts. In effect, the carbon captured from the atmosphere and stored in the forest significantly outweighs emissions from forest operations or processing activities.

"If you weigh the emissions from forestry activities with the carbon caught up in the plantations, the forestry industry absorbs carbon to the tune of 13 to 1 over the first Kyoto commitment period," Mr Taylor says.

The current credit system, coupled with weak timber markets, meant that few companies were prepared to replant. Given the economic conditions present the industry faced, and the nationalisation of carbon credits, harvesting has been outstripping replanting.

"As a result the country was facing an environmental as well as economic catastrophe."

"We are delighted that Mr Anderton has recognized the importance of forests to the nation and to the environment and the council is heartened by the Ministers short timeframes for response on this issue."

Mr Taylor says what is particularly pleasing is that Mr Anderton is promoting what we have been saying for decades that forests provide the country with a multitude of economic as well as social and environmental benefits by identifying additional benefits to carbon sequestration such as protection from adverse weather events and reduced nitrification of waterways

Mr Taylor said forestry had made a significant economic contribution to the southern region over the years. A recent Economic Impact Assessment found the industry directly employs in excess of 2,400 full time equivalent workers, and generated \$264 million in real GDP for 2003.

*Further information on the region's forestry industry and the Southern Wood Council can be found on [www.southernwoodcouncil.co.nz](http://www.southernwoodcouncil.co.nz)*

*For further information contact Phil Taylor on 03 455 5512 or 027 4876890*