



For immediate release

40th Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers

APPALACHIAN CORRIDOR APPLAUDS THE COUILLARD ADMINISTRATION FOR RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTIVITY AS A MEASURE TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE

Eastman, September 15, 2016 – Appalachian Corridor and other partners of the Staying Connected Initiative, a 2 Countries One Forest program, applaud the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers for signing a resolution that recognizes the value of forests and waterways and calls for collaboration across state, provincial, and international borders to ensure they remain connected. Forests are essential to the vitality of the region's native wildlife and plants, as well as its human communities, livelihoods, economies, and quality of life. Keeping them connected, particularly within the context of climate change, protects all of these values by bolstering resilience and fostering adaptation.

A Significant Resolution for the Appalachians of Southern Québec

The Appalachians of Southern Québec, where a large part of Québec's biodiversity can be found, are particularly sensitive to disturbances and fragmentation. This resolution is highly relevant as it recognizes the importance and urgent need to protect connectivity between large forests and, therefore, natural corridors. "This is great news and we look forward to seeing how this resolution will be implemented on our territory of action and on a larger scale. Since climate change is a top priority at the ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, connectivity as a measure of adaptation to face climate change is finally recognized. While maintaining connectivity, we make sure to protect healthy and connected natural areas in order for wildlife to better adapt to climate change. Working together will ensure that we achieve successful results in protecting our landscapes" said Mélanie Lelièvre, Executive Director at Appalachian Corridor.

Working together on both sides of the border

The vast forest spanning the border of the northeastern U.S. and southeastern Canada is globally important as the most intact, contiguous temperate hardwood forest in the world. It is home to over five million people in five states and four provinces, along with countless native wildlife and plants. As the climate changes and new development and road infrastructure expand, cross-border collaboration is essential to ensure that the landscape remains connected for both nature and people.

The action of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers aligns with cross-border collaboration that led scientists and conservation groups from the U.S. and Canada to form Two Countries, One Forest, a binational conservation organization focused on the protection, conservation and restoration of forests and natural heritage across this region. Their analyses showed that despite hosting large intact forest blocks, the region runs the risk of becoming separated into “ecological islands” unless steps are taken to safeguard forest connectivity across the landscape.

“We thank the Governors and Premiers for this catalytic step to safeguard the health and resilience of the region’s forests and waterways. Our forested landscape is as rich in wildlife as it is vital to our economy and way of life. Working across borders will have far greater impact than working alone. On behalf of SCI’s many partners, we look forward to working with the New England states and eastern Canadian provinces to implement this resolution,” said Jessie Levine of TNC Canada, Coordinator of the Staying Connected Initiative.

The Staying Connected Initiative (www.stayingconnectedinitiative.org) is a unique cross-border public/private partnership of nearly 30 collaborators. Through science, land protection, land use planning, local outreach, policy engagement, and transportation planning, SCI partners work together to ensure a connected landscape for people and nature.

Appalachian Corridor (www.appalachiancorridor.ca) is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 2002 with a mission to protect natural areas in the Appalachian region of Southern Québec.

Click here for the full text of the resolution:

<http://www.scics.gc.ca/english/conferences.asp?a=viewdocument&id=2478>

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