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ENGOS WELCOME FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROTECT TASMANIAN FORESTS AND REBUILD FOREST INDUSTRY

Environment groups today welcomed the Federal Government's engagement and support to implement the Tasmanian "Forests Statement of Principles" and called on Tasmanian Premier Bartlett to start the moratorium on logging high conservation value forests.

Prime Minister Gillard announced a range of measures to support the Statement of Principles, starting with a logging moratorium, the appointment of an independent facilitator to oversee implementation and an assessment of the future options for the Tasmanian timber industry, consistent with the Principles Agreement.

"This is an important demonstration of leadership by the Gillard Government and we are encouraged by the government's initial support," said Lindsay Hesketh of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

"It is now critical for the Tasmanian Government to immediately start implementing the agreed logging moratorium. This must start now to ensure agreed timelines are met for a complete logging moratorium of identified high conservation value forests." said Vica Bayley, spokesperson for The Wilderness Society.

"The moratorium is urgently required to ensure the protection of high conservation value forest across Tasmania, including areas under immediate threat of logging."

"The implementation of the moratorium will relieve pressure and allow time and space for substantive investigations and discussions to occur about a new sustainable timber industry in Tasmania" concluded Phil Pullinger, Director of Environment Tasmania.

Environment groups look forward to working with the Gillard Government's appointed facilitator to implement the principles.

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