

Steve Reed OBE MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

9 July 2024

Dear Mr Reed OBE MP,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, I hope you are embracing the opportunities of your new role. I am writing to introduce the Institute of Chartered Foresters, the professional body for foresters in the UK. We have over 2,000 members employed in the private, public and third sectors, working in universities and research centres, in consultancy and forestry management (both rural and urban) throughout the UK. Our call to action, [Trees for People, Place and Nature](#), highlights the key areas that we would like to see you, as the newly elected government, acknowledging as a priority to address the timber, biodiversity and climate crises.

The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) sets the entry standards for the profession, supports our members, offers guidance to professionals in other sectors, and provides educational advice and training. We strive to enhance public and political understanding of forestry, and we are the sole UK body that confers the titles of Chartered Forester and Chartered Arboriculturist.

The Labour government's ambitious plans for economic growth and opportunity expansion are indeed exciting, but they will undoubtedly present challenges. We wish to extend our support and emphasise that the forest and timber industry can help address some of the challenges and opportunities outlined in your manifesto, such as the skills crisis, post-16 education, economic growth, carbon goals, and improved access to nature. However, we are disheartened by the absence of recognition in your manifesto for the role of forestry and timber in supporting both the economy and the government's carbon ambitions. Reducing our reliance on offshoring and providing and utilising more home-grown timber will not only support our construction sector but can also contribute to decarbonisation and prevent imports of lower-quality timber into British markets.

I look forward to hearing in due course who will be assigned specific responsibility for forestry within the new government and will follow up with them to highlight our priorities and ideas in more detail and to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work together. In the meantime, I wish you success in your role and in achieving your objectives.

Yours sincerely,



Louise Simpson
Executive Director