

Press release from the Sunshine Coast Chamber of Commerce on the Closure of Howe Sound Pulp and Paper

August 20, 2026

The Sunshine Coast Chamber of Commerce is deeply saddened by the announcement that Domtar will permanently close the Howe Sound Pulp and Paper mill at Port Mellon, affecting approximately 400 workers and their families.

The mill has been part of the fabric of this coast for well over a century. The people who worked there - many for decades - are our neighbours, our customers, and, in many cases, members of our own families. Our first thoughts are with them, and with the wider Port Mellon community.

The closure is a devastating blow to those directly affected and will also be felt by businesses and communities across the Sunshine Coast. It comes at a difficult time for BC's forestry sector, following a prolonged downturn in global pulp and forest-product markets. This is not a reflection of the people who worked at this mill, their dedication, or the community they helped build.

What we're doing now

- We are reaching out to our membership to identify current hiring needs across the Sunshine Coast. As opportunities come in, we will share them with affected workers and through our regular member communications.
- We are pointing displaced workers toward Community Futures Sunshine Coast, whose business counselling, financing programs and Venture Connect succession-planning services may be helpful to those considering self-employment or taking over an existing local business.
- We support the establishment of a coordinated community transition table, bringing together WorkBC, Service Canada, local training providers and other relevant organizations. Workers facing this transition should have a clear place to turn for information about retraining, employment opportunities, resume support and Employment Insurance, rather than having to navigate these systems alone. We will participate in and help promote such an initiative.
- We will continue to advocate, alongside local governments, First Nations, businesses and regional partners, for economic diversification and investment that strengthens the resilience of the Sunshine Coast and reduces our dependence on any single employer or industry.

If you're a local business with current openings, please let us know. We want to help connect available employment opportunities with workers affected by this closure.

If you were employed at the mill and are looking for information or support, please reach out. We will do our best to point you toward the appropriate resources, even where we cannot provide the support directly ourselves.

This is a hard day for the Sunshine Coast. Howe Sound Pulp and Paper has been part of this community for generations, and its closure will leave a significant gap. But this community has come through difficult chapters before. The Chamber's role now is to help our businesses, workers and communities navigate this transition - and to work with our partners to build a stronger, more diversified and resilient local economy for the future.