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**The Woodland League**  
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**Press Release**

Dedicated To Restoring The Relationship  
Between People & Their Native Woodlands.

**Ireland simply cannot afford to sell the people's forests.**

**“Land is the source of all material wealth, from it we get everything we use, or value, whether it be food, clothing, fuel, shelter, metals, or precious stones. The availability of land is the key to human existence and it's distribution and use are of vital importance”**

**(Charles Brickdale, Chief land registrar of England and Wales 1900-1923)**

Hidden amongst the multiple layers of cutbacks proposed in the recent McCarthy report, is the outrageous suggestion that Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board and its assets which include one and a half million acres of public forests be privatised. The sale of these lands, will mean no access for the public to the forest resource, largely created using EU public funds. The State has already sold our gas, oil, minerals, and fishing rights.

The Woodland League is a not for profit NGO, and we are vehemently opposed to this extremely short-sighted idea which panders only to narrow vested interests. This sale of one tenth of Ireland's land mass will include the people's millennium forests along with some of the most valuable remnants of Ireland's native forests.

These native forests must be kept under public care due to their enormous value for the restoration of our devastated biodiversity (our natural wealth), as we move into an uncertain future. The rest of the forest estate for instance, could be leased to local communities who have been trained to manage them as a sustainable resource providing fuel security, charcoal, raw materials, food, herbs, income from local carbon lock-up among the many other proven benefits of sustainable forest management.

The future economic systems will be dependant on the wise use and management of natural resources, The forests and it's relationship to air, and water that form the one entity are precious vital commodities, that must remain in public hands to enable the Island to sustain itself as we face into a major recession coupled with the problems associated with Climate change.

Coillte have neglected the forest resource in their care, focussing instead on being the largest land development company during the boom years. Very little of the 300 million euro profits they accumulated over twenty years was invested in the forests nor any dividend paid to the public purse as is the norm with other semi-state bodies.

The Woodland League urge the public to contact their elected representatives, the media and trade unions to ensure this essential natural resource remains in public ownership. We have created an alternative plan to sustainably manage our woodlands for the common good. (Please refer to the front page of our website, [www.woodlandleague.org](http://www.woodlandleague.org))

The long-term economic benefits of sustainably managed woodlands far outweighs any short-term financial advantage from the sale of this national asset. Relative to the enormity of the national debt, the revenue from this sale would represent a meagre pittance.