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**MARTIN MARS WATER BOMBERS SOLD TO LOCAL VANCOUVER ISLAND  
COMPANY**

Vancouver (BC) – Ownership of the Martin Mars Water Bombers will be staying in local hands, as TimberWest Forest Corp. has reached an agreement to sell the historic water bombers to Coulson Aircrane Ltd. of Port Alberni.

The announcement was made today by Paul McElligott, TimberWest President and CEO, and Wayne Coulson, President and CEO of Coulson Group of Companies.

“We are very pleased to have reached this agreement to sell the Martin Mars,” said McElligott. “This is a positive outcome as the water bombers will be operated by a local company that is experienced and focussed on aviation firefighting. TimberWest takes great pride in having operated the Martin Mars over the last several years and we know that Coulson will continue that tradition.”

“Coulson Aircrane has a strong expertise in aerial firefighting and the addition of the Martin Mars aircraft strengthens our capacity to provide this service,” said Coulson. “These are well maintained, safe aircraft, which we look forward to operating for many years to come.”

Terms of the purchase agreement are confidential, but involve the purchase of the water bombers and supporting infrastructure, including spare engines, parts and other equipment.

“As part of the purchase agreement, one of the planes will be made available to Port Alberni upon retirement for use as a heritage attraction. This was a condition of the sale and reflects the commitment we made to the people of Port Alberni and our support for local communities,” added McElligott.

The Martin Mars Water Bombers, initially conceived as military bombers, have been providing firefighting services in British Columbia for over 40 accident-free years. They are based in Sproat Lake, near Port Alberni on Vancouver Island, and were originally operated by a consortium of partners, including TimberWest. However, for the last five years, TimberWest has been the sole operator.

**Additional Information**

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## TIMBERWEST FOREST CORP.

- A total of five Martin Mars aircraft were built in Baltimore, Maryland in 1942-43.
- They were originally conceived as a military bomber for long-range mission and patrols.
- The planes were redesigned and classified for long-range general transportation because of their demonstrated heavy lift capability.
- In 1959 a consortium of British Columbia coastal forest companies formed Forest Industries Flying Tankers Limited, which then purchased the remaining aircraft and converted them to water bombers.
- Two of the aircraft have continued to operate since 1959, providing unsurpassed firefighting protection services to British Columbia's coast and interior and, as required, to neighbouring jurisdictions in Alberta, Washington State, Oregon and California.
- The planes are operated by a crew of four, including a captain, first officer and two flight engineers.
- Each plane can hold over 27,000 litres (7,200 U.S. gallons) of water/foam load, enough to cover three to four acres in a single drop. The planes have the capability to use fresh or ocean water.
- It takes the aircraft a skimming distance of about two kilometres to pick up a load of water. They can operate from a body of water as small as six kilometres depending on surrounding topography and other approach and departure requirements.
- Both aircraft have the capability to drop either straight water or water mixed with foam onto fires. In 2005, one of the aircraft was also fitted with long-term suppressant.
- Once the planes are airborne, foam concentrate is injected into the water load at a ratio of 30 U.S. gallons into the 7,200 U.S. gallon water load.
- Once dropped, the tumbling action causes aeration which converts the water load into a foam load, a process repeated for each drop.
- The planes are housed at Sproat Lake on Vancouver Island, but have the capability to operate for extended periods away from their base.