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From: Crystal Roberts <crystalrcares@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 2:16 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: Opposition to H 7618 the Forestry and Forest Parity Act

Dear Committee members,

I am writing in opposition to H 7618, the Forestry and Forest Parity Act, which would make it more profitable to log forests in Rhode Island, including clearcutting forests for solar and other land development, as well as clearcutting forests on state-owned land.

H 7618 would remove the use and sales tax for forest product operational equipment including chainsaws, logging trucks, tree chippers, mulch grinders, chip screeners, sawdust blowers, conveyors, power generators, firewood processors, log skidders, wood splitters, disc cleaners, tumblers, shaving mills, loaders, forklifts, firewood kilns, pallet kilns, lumber kilns, sawdust dryers, forwarders, sawmills, resaws, edgers, planers, debarkers, live log decks, green chains, tractors, winches, tree harvesters, feller bunchers, log loaders, slashers, delimiters, grapples, bucket trucks, tree cranes, and stump grinders. All of this forest product operational equipment is currently used for, and will continue to be used, for clearcutting forests in Rhode Island.

H 7618 would also expand the zoning of where logging can take place in Rhode Island to all zoning districts which includes clearcutting.

This bill is problematic for many reasons, as logging poses many risks to the health of plants, animals, waterways, & people. Passing this dangerous bill for the benefit of further incentivizing logging and the timber industry, would come at the cost of our state's dwindling natural forests. This kind of a decision could easily lead to deforestation, biodiversity loss, an increase in invasive species, water and soil degradation, a landscape more prone to wildfires, and the release of most of the stored carbon in our forests into the atmosphere as air pollution contributing to climate change. Just the creation of logging roads alone, has been shown to contaminate watersheds, to cause habitat loss, to spread diseases to humans and domestic animals, and to increase invasive species.

Furthermore, it's completely unreasonable to pass such a bill without any current bill in place to monitor & protect biodiversity in RI. Logging is by no means a "protective" move for the forest. Basically, bill H 7618 would make it more profitable to log forests - including to clearcut forests in Rhode Island, greatly expand the places where trees can be cut/logged, and would pave the way for a host of long-term environmental problems, all for an incentive that would really only benefit the greedy timber industry.

A list of further reasons to oppose bill H 7618 follows:

- Forest product operations as defined in the bill include: logging, saw milling, lumber, biochar, mulch, biomass, wood chips, saw dust, and timbers. The burning of biomass is a major carbon producer and causes serious health risks.
- When a forest is logged, most of the carbon stored in the forest is released into the atmosphere as air pollution contributing to Climate Change.

- Logging destroys biodiversity in a forest.
- Logging causes invasive species to spread in a forest. (Ex: - [Alien Invasive Species: Impacts on Forests and Forestry - A Review](#))

[Alien Invasive Species: Impacts on Forests and Forestry - A Review](#)

Alien Invasive Species: Impacts on Forests and Forestry - A Review

- Logging creates a fire hazard through the flammable wood slash left behind after the logging operation and the flammable underbrush that grows on the site afterwards due to the removed tree canopy.
- Logging degrades water and soil quality.
- Logging roads alone can lead to a number of negative consequences for wildlife, aquatic health, and the integrity of the forest. These consequences include: redirection of rainfall and runoff into area streams and rivers; introduction of increased erosion & high volume of sedimentation in the area, leading to pollution to watersheds and impact on aquatic species; wildlife species being unable to cross logging road barriers therefore having their range and distribution altered drastically on a local scale, often with a domino effect on other species in the same eco-system; increased traffic leading to increased prevalence of non-native species and diseases. Logging roads also serve as vectors for the spread of disease by allowing easy access points by humans and domestic animals to threats that would not otherwise have been accessed in an intact forest.
- Many of the state's forests are not growing back due to the overpopulation of deer eating the buds growing from the tree stumps, invasives outcompeting native species, and soil damage. Therefore, logging is not a sustainable industry in Rhode Island.
- The underbrush that grows from logging operations creates a perfect tick habitat.
- Rhode Island's economy is not dependent on the timber industry and the costs of expanding it far outweigh any benefits a larger timber industry in the state would provide.

Please oppose this un-environmental bill which could devastate Rhode Island's forests if it is passed. I do hope that you will come to the same conclusion that I have, that opposing bill H 7618 is for the best. We can do better for our future together.

Your time & consideration to these important matters is greatly appreciated.

With Best Regards,

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