

Testimony in opposition to H7618: Forestry and Forest Parity Act

George Voutes, 17 Shore Road, Bristol RI, 02809

Date of Hearing: April 4, 2024

To Chair Bennett and the honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I strongly oppose the Forestry and Forest Parity Act as it would incentivize another extractive industry. It's shameful enough that we still pay incentives to the fossil fuel industry, while they continue destroying the future of our children and grandchildren. A response to Uprise RI, attributed to the sponsor, claims "But it should go without saying that clear-cutting is off the table as an allowable activity under this bill. The legislation is specifically designed, through the inclusion of income limits, to prevent exploitation of tax breaks by large commercial logging operations while supporting smaller, sustainable forestry practices." These arguments, imply that this is not about giving tax breaks to the big, corporate timber industry, but helping small Rhode Island businesses, and that this is not about clear-cutting, are bogus and nothing more than gas lighting. Businesses with 300 employees are not small family businesses. And a text search in the bill does not show a single instance of the term "clear-cutting". I also vehemently object to opening all zoning districts to forest product operations as permitted uses. If we want our residential trees pruned or cut, there are many tree services available that the residents have been using for the longest time. We don't want industrial scale 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, or tree cranes in our neighborhoods—and this is not because of NIMBY'ism, but because it's simply not necessary. Can you even imagine the impact these industrial machines will have on our forests and neighborhoods? This is a terrible bill. Please do not bring this bill to a vote.

Thank you very much for considering my input

George Voutes

*George Voutes*

17 Shore Road

Bristol, RI 02809