

I am asking that you oppose H5098. In a very quick review of this legislation, I would raise the following concerns:

- 1) All references to protection of wildlife or biodiversity are vague. There are no references to what wildlife, in which habitats will be protected. Are there any standards for determining how such a value would be placed on animals or ecosystems?
- 2) Are the stipulations in this legislation applied differently to state, municipal, or private forestland?
- 3) Regarding municipal zoning - page 26 lines 27 and 28 refers to forest product operations being allowed in ALL zoning districts. Even residential? 2.27.1-3(4) {not 2.27.1-4} says a saw mill is a forest product operation. So this would allow a sawmill in a residential district?
- 4) taxation - pg 8 lines 11-12. Does this mean every city and town would have to redefine which buildings would be taxed at a lower rate than the normal commercial or industrial rate? So would a portion of the municipal tax dedicated to education no longer apply? If a community does not provide fire protection through their municipal taxes (e.g. South Kingstown) how would that system work?

There seems to be many contradictions in this bill. By providing such tax deductions and fewer restrictions in zoning, it would appear that increased logging, etc. would be rewarded. But it also denotes conservation of forests which would be at odds with heightened pressure to log more.

Please oppose this bill.

Barbara Walsh