

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to submit my testimony in opposition of H 5607, which aims to include forestry under the definition of "agricultural operations."

While trees are certainly a crop, our native forests are not. They are crucial habitats that are perpetually threatened by unlimited development, climate impacts, and human whim. The bill as written appears to allow anyone with farmland to harvest forests however they see fit, including by clearcutting which destroys animal habitat, alters the water cycle, compacts the earth with heavy machinery, contributes to plant loss, and depletes the nutrients.

We must start prioritizing the protection and care of the non-human beings who share space with us. These ecosystems are literally the foundation of life including *ours*.

I urge you to reject this bill as written.

Thank you,
Leigh Medeiros