



Substitute House Bill No. 5853

Public Act No. 08-172

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ALLOCATION OF STATE FOREST
TIMBER SALES, THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION FOR
CONNECTICUT STATE FORESTS AND A SUSTAINABLE FOREST
MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 23-20 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

The Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall administer the statutes relating to forestry and the protection of forests. The commissioner may employ such field and office assistants as may be necessary for the execution of his or her duties. The commissioner may, from time to time, publish the forestry laws of the state and other literature of general interest and practical value pertaining to forestry. The commissioner may enter into cooperation with departments of the federal government for the promotion of forest resource management and protection within the state. The commissioner may, with the assistance of the State Forester, develop and administer plans for the protection and management of publicly-owned woodlands. Such plans shall include, but not be limited to proposals for the establishment of forest plantations and the marketing of forest products. [The] Not later than January 10, 2010, the commissioner [may] shall apply to have

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publicly-owned woodlands or products from such woodlands certified or licensed under one or more of the following, provided the commissioner uses private funding from gifts, donations or bequests, as authorized in this section, for the cost of all such applications: (1) The [sustainable] Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program, (2) the American Tree Farm System, (3) the Canadian Standards Association's Sustainable Management System Standards, (4) the Finnish Standard, (5) the Forest Stewardship Council, (6) the Pan-European Forest Certification Program, (7) the Swedish Standards, (8) the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme, [or] (9) the Smart Wood Program, as administered by the Rainforest Alliance, or (10) any other programs deemed necessary, as determined by the commissioner. The commissioner shall implement any sustainable forestry practice necessary for such certification or licensure. The commissioner may accept, on behalf of the Department of Environmental Protection, any gifts, donations or bequests for the purposes of applying for and obtaining such certification or licensure. The commissioner may harvest forest products from woodlands owned by the state and take such other measures as he or she deems necessary for their efficient management and protection, may sell wood, timber and other products from any state woodlands whenever he or she deems such sales desirable and may develop recreational facilities in the woodlands managed by the Department of Environmental Protection. The commissioner shall charge no less than ten dollars per cord for any such wood or timber sold as fuel. The commissioner may rent state forest property and buildings thereon under his or her jurisdiction for a period not exceeding twenty-five years, provided any lease for such property and building for a term of more than ten years shall be subject to the review and approval of the State Properties Review Board. The proceeds of such sales, rentals and any receipts resulting from management of the state forests, or from reimbursements from other state departments or state institutions, shall be deposited in the General Fund in accordance with the provisions of section 4-32,

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provided the amount of annual proceeds in excess of [eight hundred seventy-five thousand] six hundred thousand dollars derived from the sale of wood, timber and other products from publicly-owned woodlands shall be deposited in the Conservation Fund, as established in section 22a-27h and shall be used only to support forestry programs. Expenditures incurred by the commissioner for the protection, management and development of the forests, the preparation and marketing of forest products and the acquisition of land for the extension and completion of the state forests as provided in section 23-21 [shall] may also be paid with moneys appropriated from the General Fund. The provisions of this section shall not apply to land owned or managed by the state on which forest resource management measures may be restricted by deed, statute, or incompatible use. As used in this section, woodland means land owned or managed by a state agency and stocked with forest tree species not less than six hundred stems per acre and at least one year old.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) On or before July 1, 2009, the Department of Environmental Protection may, within existing budgetary resources and in consultation with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, The University of Connecticut and any other entities deemed appropriate by said commissioner, complete a study regarding sustainable harvesting of forests in this state.

(b) If a study is conducted in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, The University of Connecticut and any other such entities deemed appropriate by said commissioner, shall develop a sustainable forest harvesting plan based on the results of such study. The plan shall take into account carbon credit opportunities, the potential for maintaining a sustainable supply of biomass fuels, and the agricultural and silvicultural capability of the region.

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(c) If a study is conducted in accordance with subsection (a) of this section, not later than July 1, 2009, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment the conclusions of such study.

Approved June 6, 2008