

February 23, 2018

Greetings Environmental Committee Members:

I am writing to provide testimony in support of portions of SB-00102. As President of CT Professional Timber Producers Association (TIMPRO), a non-profit organization with 90 plus members of CT's Forest Products Industry, I speak on behalf of our membership in support of the technical changes to the Forest Practices Act found in Section 2 of this Bill. These three minor technical changes will make a big difference for our membership and help improve their ability to conduct business within the State of CT. The 60 day grace period has been needed for a long period of time. This will fix the current problem of needing to take the Forest Practitioner Test all over again and pay the hefty fees associated with this. The acceptance of qualified foresters from outside States would be very beneficial for our industry. This kind of reciprocity has been accepted by many of the States within New England and CT has been slow to jump aboard. As our industry ages and foresters retire we might find ourselves in need of the younger foresters from MA, VT, RI and NY to help keep our forest properly managed. Stream lining of the Forest Practitioner continuing education requirements is crucial as a result of the current understaffing within the DEEP's Forestry Division.

We are NOT in support of Section 7 regarding solar projects over 2 megawatts found on private land. We feel that the changing of the wording to "permanently" would make it very difficult for private landowners to maintain their property rights. Putting the power of financial decisions that could be crucial for a family to maintain and prevent from selling their land in the hands of the Citing Council is a bad idea.

Furthermore, TIMPRO would like to see an amendment added to this Bill that would address Section 1. Section 23-65g subsection (a) & (b) of the CT General Statutes regarding the appointment of the members of the Forest Practices Advisory Committee. The means by which the appointments are currently made is very vague and leaves room for inaction and/or wrong doing. Clarity needs to be written into this Statue to clearly define who is responsible for these appointments and to make sure that the all sectors of the Advisory Committee are clearly represented.

Here is the language from 2017 which I would ask to be included in an amendment to SB 102:

Section 1. Section 23-65g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(a) There is established a Forest Practices Advisory Board consisting of the State Forester or [his designee, and nine public members, six of whom shall be appointed one each by the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the House of Representatives and three of whom shall be appointed by the Governor. The members appointed shall include a professional forester in private practice, a representative of the forest products industry,] the State Forester's designee, and nine public members, six of whom shall be appointed by the legislative leaders, as follows: (1) One by the president pro tempore of the Senate who shall be a professional forester in private practice, (2) one by the majority leader of the Senate who shall be a professor of forestry or natural resources from a college or university located in the state, (3) one by the minority leader of the Senate who shall be a member of the public, (4) one by the speaker of the House of Representatives who shall be an owner of not fewer than ten but not more than two hundred fifty acres of forest land, (5) one by the majority leader of the House of Representatives who shall be a representative of the forest products industry, and (6) one by the minority leader of the House of Representatives who shall be a member of the public. Three public members shall be appointed by the Governor and shall consist of one member who is an officer of an environmental organization headquartered within the state which is concerned primarily with forests, [a professor of forestry or natural resources from a college or university within the state, an owner of not less than ten nor more than two hundred fifty acres of forest land,] one member who is a representative of an environmental organization not primarily concerned with forests and one member who is a member of an inland wetlands agency.

(b) The appointed members of the initial board shall be appointed so that the terms of two members shall expire on December 31, 1993, the terms of two members shall expire on December 31, 1994, the terms of two members shall expire on December 31, 1995, and the term of one member shall expire on December 31, 1996. Thereafter, each member shall be appointed for a term of four years. Vacancies on the board shall be filled [in the same manner as the original appointments] by the appointing authority. Each member of the board shall serve until his successor is appointed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our testimony.

Sincerely,

Brennan

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