

March 23, 2017

Senator Saviello, Representative Tucker and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Mark Doty, a forester and public affairs manager of Weyerhaeuser, we own and manage 850,000 acres of timberland in the Kennebec River watershed. I am speaking in opposition to LD 901.

We are concerned with the vast acreage that LD 901 includes of our working forests adjacent to the identified scenic points on the Appalachian Trail, effectively a 30 mile wide swath of land through the heart of our ownership, and from within the White Mountain National Forest Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness Area, a 15 mile wide zone.

Our lands are actively managed working forests, not wilderness areas. We grow and harvest trees on a perpetual basis, while protecting the values of air, water and wildlife, and offering recreational opportunities. We directly employ more than 40 people in Maine, including more than 25 foresters, and contract for the services of logging contractors, road building contractors, silviculture contractors, as well as providing wood to a variety of mills.

We are proud to practice sustainable forestry and provide recreational opportunities to those who reside in and visit the area. Such as snowmobile trails, ATV trails, hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing and wildlife watching.

When Scott Paper owned these lands, they sold land for the AT corridor, what Scott did not sell were any rights to the adjacent land, which is what this bill seeks to expand through regulation. As Plum Creek during the Concept Plan public process, we agreed to a variety of activities and restrictions on some of our lands in exchange for development rights on some of our lands. This bill seeks to take rights without compensation.

Our concerns in the short term;

Our core business is timber, but we recognize some of our lands have additional uses, including renewable energy. With operating wind projects on our land, we have found wind power projects are very compatible with multiple-use working forest, and an additional multiple-use earning stream, important especially during downturns in the market cycle such as we are currently experiencing.

Businesses in Maine need predictable policy and regulation. The expedited permitting areas were designed by a task force and adopted unanimously by the legislature in 2008 to encourage wind energy development in certain areas. Wind power producers have relied on the regulatory process, which is lengthy, and invested in siting studies that often last for years before the

permitting process. Consistent policy over a number of years is required, this bill calls for a huge change and would be disruptive to the process.

We see a longer term impact:

We are concerned that visual standards and their expansion that apply to wind projects today may over time be applied to other activities, such as road building, harvesting operations, or development of any kind. We can look to the Appalachian Trail itself for evidence of ever increasing restrictions, what started as a voluntary trail allowed through private land, changed to NPS fee ownership (sometimes through eminent domain) in many areas a corridor just 1,000 feet wide, today is proposed to encumber a 30 mile wide swath with visual assessments required for wind generation facilities in the expedited permitting areas. What is next, visual assessments for harvesting and road building? We ask that you not allow the restrictions to increase.

This bill sets a chilling precedent of public views from hiking trails determining land use restrictions, allowing a relative few recreational users on the AT and within the wilderness area to restrict the uses of private working land.

The state needs to strike a fair balance of private rights with public values, this bill does not do that, please do not support LD 901.