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An Act To Further Delegate Permit-granting Authority to the Bureau of Forestry

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §480-E-3, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 599, §13 and amended by c. 657, Pt. W, §§5 and 7 and PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §23, is further amended to read:

§ 480-E-3. Delegation of permit-granting authority to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry

Notwithstanding section 480-E-1, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry shall issue all permits under this article for timber harvesting activities ~~that are located within the unorganized and deorganized areas of the State as defined in Title 12, section 682, subsection 1 and in all areas of the State, except Indian reservations, that~~ are not subject to review and approval by the department under any other article of this chapter. For the purposes of this section, "timber harvesting activities" means timber harvesting, the construction and maintenance of roads used primarily for timber harvesting, the mining of gravel used for the construction and maintenance of roads used primarily for timber harvesting and other activities conducted to facilitate timber harvesting.

1. Activity located in organized and unorganized area. ~~If a timber harvesting activity is located in part within an organized area and in part within an unorganized or deorganized area, that portion of the timber harvesting activity within the organized area is subject to department review under this article if that portion is an activity pursuant to this article. That portion of the timber harvesting activity within an unorganized or deorganized area of the State is not subject to the requirements of this article except as provided in subsection 2.~~

2. Allowed use. ~~If a timber harvesting activity is located as described in subsection 1, the department may review that portion of the activity within the unorganized and deorganized areas if the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry determines that the project is an allowed use within the subdistrict or subdistricts for which it is proposed. A permit from the Bureau of Forestry is not required for those aspects of an activity approved by the department under this subsection.~~

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry, in consultation with the department, shall annually review standards for timber harvesting activities adopted by the Bureau of Forestry to ensure that the standards afford a level of protection consistent with the goals of this article and the goals of Title 12, chapter 805, subchapter 3-A.

SUMMARY

Under the Natural Resources Protection Act, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry each have permitting authority

with respect to timber harvesting activities. This bill consolidates this permitting authority under the bureau.