



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1529

An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Anthony Hourihan and I represent Irving Woodlands. Irving Woodlands owns and manages approximately 1.3 million acres of timberland in Aroostook County. All the lands are managed under an Outcome Based Forestry agreement with the State, and are Third party certified under FSC, SFI and ISO 14001.

Irving Woodlands understands the ecological importance of Late Successional and Old Growth forests and is certainly not opposed to the conservation of representative stands or areas that meet certain criteria. Our company has a policy on all our lands aimed at Maintaining Late-Successional Forests, and our management plans for Maine indicate an objective of 10% Old and Very old in five representative forest community types.

This bill would codify the definitions of Late-Successional forest and Old Growth forests without any input from working foresters and landowners, and once these definitions as proposed are in statute they may not align with what other foresters and ecologists agree are the proper way to define these. Indeed, these definitions talk about "signs of human activities", why not age as a determining factor?

The bill requires a report on the conservation of these types of forests and discusses statewide strategies, and anticipated actions to further enhance conservation of late successional forest and old growth. And the same theme of this entire piece of legislation is that there is no consultation or input from landowners and foresters, who own and manage these resources.

The other problem with LD 1529 is the attempt to circumvent the existing planning and land use processes in the State that are used by the Land Use Planning Commission. This bill would require the commission to move well over 1000 lakes from the existing zoning to a much more restrictive zoning and eliminates the landowner's ability to undertake activities within a ¼ mile. This potentially could mean that existing campsites, and roads used by the public to access lakes could be eliminated. LUPC is starting the revision of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and similar to the bill to alter the make-up of the commission and reduce the influence of the citizens living in the unorganized territories, this bill pre-empts the commission with insufficient public, and landowner consultation.

In summary the idea of Conserving Late Successional old forests should be further discussed and a collaborative approach agreed to, before legislation is enacted that will have a substantial impact on landowners.

Thank you for your time and I urge that you vote ought not to pass on LD1529.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anthony Hourihan
Irving Woodlands