

3/20/23

THANK YOU, CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE ACF COMMITTEE

FOR 35 YEARS I'VE OWNED AND MANAGED HANDS-ON SEVERAL SMALL WOODLOTS, HARVESTING FOR SAW-LOG OAK AND PINE. I INCLUDE MYSELF AS A STAKEHOLDER.

WHY WE NEED A FORESTRY ADVISORY BOARD:

FIRST, BECAUSE REDUCING HEAT-PRODUCING CO2 ALREADY IN OUR ATMOSPHERE IS JUST AS URGENT AS REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM FOSSIL FUEL. WIND AND SOLAR CAN'T REDUCE ATMOSPHERIC CO2. WE RELY TOTALLY ON FORESTS TO CAPTURE IT.

DESPITE SCIENTIFIC PROOF THAT BIOMASS ENERGY EMITS AS MUCH CO2 AS FOSSIL FUELS, THE STATE CONTINUES SUPPORTING IT AND ITS EXPANSION. SUBSIDIZED WERE 2 BIOMASS PLANTS THAT FAILED. BIOMASS IS CALLED RENEWABLE ENERGY, BUT IT'S NOT CLEAN ENERGY - A CRUCIAL DISTINCTION. FORESTS CUT FOR BIOMASS REQUIRE DECADES TO AGAIN CAPTURE CARBON. BUT NOW IS WHEN WE MOST NEED FORESTS TO CAPTURE IT.

LOW-VALUE BIOMASS ROBS LOGGERS, PROCESSORS AND MAINE'S ECONOMY OF THE CHANCE TO GROW, PRODUCE AND SELL ENOUGH HIGH-QUALITY TIMBER FOR IN-DEMAND DURABLE PRODUCTS. ITS CO2 EMISSIONS SUBTRACT FROM THOSE PREVENTED BY SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY.

MAINE'S FORESTS ARE OVER-HARVESTED. ITS FOREST VOLUME IS THE LOWEST IN NEW ENGLAND. TREE SIZE AND QUALITY IS TYPICALLY LOW. TOO MUCH IS LOW-VALUE PELLET GRADE. CAPACITY FOR CARBON CAPTURE IS LIMITED. MAINE'S FORESTRY FAILURES ARE ABOUT PERPETUATING PRODUCTION OF LOW-VALUE PRODUCTS. THIS AT A TIME WHEN RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS BY PRODUCING DURABLE PRODUCTS FROM MATURE TREES THAT CAPTURE A LOT OF CARBON IS BOTH ESSENTIAL AND PROFITABLE.

THE RECENT 30 MILLION DOLLAR NEFF GRANT WILL PROVIDE FORESTLAND OWNERS INCENTIVES TO GROW BETTER FORESTS. COMBINED WITH ENROLLMENT IN HIGH-QUALITY CARBON PROGRAMS, PLUS A TRANSFER OF STATE BIOMASS SUBSIDIES TO MONETARY INCENTIVES INSTEAD, CAN TOGETHER PROVIDE ENOUGH INCOME FOR MANY MORE LANDOWNERS, SMALL AND LARGE, TO GROW FORESTS FOR DURABLE WOOD PRODUCTS AND CARBON CAPTURE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, MANY COULD GROW THEIR WOODLANDS TO GREATER MATURITY BEFORE HARVESTING, THEREBY GROWING MAINE'S UNDERSTOCKED FORESTS.

ITS TIME TO TRANSFORM MAINE FORESTS FROM STAGNANT MEDIUM-LOW-LEVEL PRODUCER OF TOO MUCH LOW-VALUE PRODUCT TOWARD WHAT OUR FORESTS ARE CAPABLE OF. THE TRUE VALUE OF HIGH-LEVEL CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE IS BEYOND COUNTING. WHAT IF TOO LITTLE IS DONE HERE AND ELSEWHERE? WELL, CLIMATE CAUSED DECLINE OF MAINE'S AND THE REST OF THE WORLDS FORESTS HAS ALREADY BEGUN.

I PRESENT MY THOUGHTS, NOT IN EXPECTATION OF WHAT A FOREST ADVISORY BOARD OUGHT TO DO, BUT TO PUT FORTH A RANGE OF OPTIONS THAT EMBRACE THE KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATIVENESS OF A BROAD CROSSSECTION OF STAKEHOLDERS. THANK YOU.

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