

March 20, 2023

Representative, Bill Pluecer, Senator Henry Ingwersen and other members of the Agricultural Conservation and Forestry Committee

My name is Greg Foster and I have been a consulting forester since 1994. I have extensive experience managing forest property for private forest landowner's in southern Maine. I am also a many year planning board member in Raymond, and am on the recently formed Raymond Comprehensive Plan Committee. My comments are mine and are not of my home town of Raymond or any other organization.

I am here in support of LD 1048. I have had experience with towns that have created their own forest practices ordinances, but for today's testimony, I will describe my experience in my home town of Raymond. There were seven paragraphs in our land use ordinance that regulated forestry in some manner. Six of those paragraphs were ordinances that in effect were already regulated by state law. Slash, and soil disturbance are two that come to mind. The most poorly thought out paragraph stated that no more than 70% of any one stand can be removed. Nowhere in the ordinance did it state that forest landowners map their stands prior to a timber sale so the town would have a base map for enforcement. Nor did the town have a map (similar to a zoning map) of each stand on forest parcels in the town. Nor did the town require a permit so that the CEO might hire a forester to establish each stand prior to harvesting. Having visited many forest properties in Raymond, I am quite sure I saw violations of the 70% limit. One property is actually owned by the town. As far as I know, this portion of the ordinance was never enforced. I certainly could have made the CEO enforce it, but did not for very good reasons. To my knowledge none of these ordinance were ever enforced, and if they were, it is highly likely the DEP or the MFS was contacted.

If prior to creating this ordinance, the town had meet with qualified professionals, it is likely the outcome of these ordinances would have been better, or none at all.

Ultimately, I pursued eliminating all 7 paragraphs. Unfortunately, I was only able to eliminate 5. Once any ordinance is passed, it is extremely difficult to be rid of them, hence the need for wisdom by town when adopting such ordinances. LD 1048 strengthens this ability and I support its passage.

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