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LEXINGTON TWP

Statement in support of LD 125  
Submitted by Jonathan Carter, Dir. Forest Ecology Network  
Date: March 2, 2021

Good morning. I am submitting written testimony in support of LD 125 for the Forest Ecology Network. The Forest Ecology Network for over two decades has been advocating for forest practices that enhance and maintain forest health. The health of Maine's forests in the face of climate change has never been more important. We should be managing our forests in ways that enhance carbon sequestration, not diminish. I could testify about the pernicious impact of glyphosate on wildlife or human health, but I am sure you are already aware of it. The science is so clear and has been available for years. The impacts span from the decline of the monarch butterfly to the development of cancers in humans. Because the science was so damning in Europe glyphosate has been banned.

The angle I want to briefly explore, although there is voluminous science on this as well, is how herbicides use works against building the carbon sink capacity of the Maine Woods. Aerial herbicides are used on clearcuts and plantations to kill hardwood competition. Clearcut logging and plantation forestry are the worst logging practices in regards to building carbon sequestration potential. They should be taken out of the tool box. Spraying herbicides on a clearcut disrupts the natural healing process. The natural succession of plant species that are necessary to stabilize and repair the damage. It is a well-established fact that hardwoods sequester more carbon than softwoods. Herbicides select for softwoods and alter the natural diversity.

Plantation forests completely destroy natural diversity. Planting softwood species, often in former hardwood sites, requires the use of herbicides. Once again, the science is very clear – monoculture plantations are extremely poor sequesters when compared to any other natural forest type.

Some 30 plus years ago in late August I set out with friends to canoe the Dead River from below Grand Falls to the Forks. This section of water provides some of the most challenging whitewater canoeing in the state. As we followed logging roads toward our put in point, I can remember the anticipatory tension and excitement of "doing the Dead". About two miles from Grand Falls, we were stopped by a Scott Paper Company roadblock. A forester informed us that if we proceeded, we could not come out for at least 24 hours due to a herbicide spray project underway. I could hear the sounds of helicopters overhead. When I inquired about the safety of the chemicals being used and the potential problems associated with drift, the forester told me not to worry and that the chemicals being used were perfectly safe.

We have come a long way. We know these herbicides are toxic and damaging to the wildlife and human health. Thankfully, the acreage sprayed has been reduced from tens of thousands of acres to less than 10,000. But if truth is be told, one acre is too much.

In the face of climate change, we need to do everything humanly possible to enhance forest carbon sequestration. Eliminating the use of herbicides is a step in that direction.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 125