

March 5, 2021

Written Testimony in Opposition of LD 125

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, members of the Committee, my name is Andrew King. I am a lifetime resident of Easton in Aroostook County and I am also Maine Licensed Professional Forester. I am writing to you in opposition to LD 125, "An Act to Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture."

Maine is a truly unique place for many reasons. With nearly 17.6 million acres of forestland, we are blessed to have one of the most diverse forest landscapes in the world. I am fortunate enough to have a role in managing this amazing resource, and it is a very rewarding career. It is a demanding job, and we take our decisions very serious as they have far reaching and long-lasting consequences. The difficulty is that these decisions are often not solely based on the best available science, there are always trade-offs. We are asked to manage a forest resource that will not only provide benefits to society today, but also a hundred years in the future. Those benefits include timber, wildlife, water quality, plant diversity, and many different types of recreation. We are asked to provide a sustainable supply of fiber for the lumber and pulp mills that contribute to Maine's economy while still providing a haven for residents and tourists to recreate, all while protecting the environment. Though the balancing act is a struggle, it does work. The forest product markets we have return value for the economy and allow us to meet both landowner and public objectives with our forest management strategies. I thought a lot about this last summer while immersed in the North Maine Woods paddling the Allagash with my family. "How do we as forest managers make this all work?"

However, there is a new demand being asked of us, independent of ownership objectives or other collective values. It is for Maine to become net carbon neutral by 2045. While there are many different strategies being looked at to achieve this, but we will primarily rely on our forest resource to get us there. While attending the University of Maine to get my forestry degree I learned of the "Triad Forest Management" concept. Developed by Dr Robert Seymour and Dr Malcolm Hunter, it is a balanced three-part approach to managing forests. One piece of the forest can be intensively managed, one piece ecologically managed, and one piece set aside as a reserve. This approach would allow maximized returns on the intensively managed piece while being balanced by reserves and actively managing the rest of the land in an ecologically responsible way. This is one strategy being looked at around the globe as a solution to combat climate change and provide for the needs of society, while protecting fragile ecosystems. It could provide the most value to society while meeting the demand for sequestering carbon and preserving forest ecosystems. In fact, The Maine Natural Climate Solutions Initiative recently released its Interim Report which looked at several different versions of this concept for Maine's forests. One of the key findings was that the initiative is achievable with some sort of intensive silviculture in Northern Maine.

If this bill passes, I fear that intensive silviculture would come at an exorbitant cost at best, if not be impossible on a large enough scale to make any sort of impact. I urge you to oppose this bill and vote ought not to pass. Please allow professional forest managers to continue to responsibly use herbicide as a management tool.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew King Maine Licensed Professional Forester