

Eric Kingsley  
South Portland

As an economist that works with forest industries across Maine and across North America, I am opposed to this legislation.

- Banning aerial applications of herbicides shuts down tree planting on Maine's commercial forestlands and eliminates a management tool for foresters in natural regeneration management.
- This practice has been a proven and safe silvicultural and agricultural tool for decades, similar to thinning plants in your garden. Forest sites are treated once or at most twice over a 40- to 80-year crop rotation, subject to rigorous regulations.
- The use of herbicides for forestry is regulated by the EPA and Maine DEP, including rates of application and allowed application sites.
- The Maine Board of Pesticide Control (BPC) has the authority to regulate pesticides in Maine. The BPC has expertise in pesticides, investigatory staff and civil penalty authority for misapplications.

At the request of the 129th Legislature, the BPC authorized an independent assessment by SCS Global Services of conformance to State of Maine pesticide use regulations by industrial forest management companies engaged in aerial application of herbicides on forestland. SCS reported: "At bottom line, no evidence was gathered during the course of the verification audit to contradict the following overall conclusion: The State of Maine regulatory framework, within which aerial application of herbicides in forest operations takes place, is functioning as designed,"

- It would be a mistake to take away this essential tool at a time when Maine's forest products industry is rebounding. The wood that supplies our mills today is a result of a variety of silvicultural practices used by professional foresters in the past, we need every tool at our disposal to grow the forests of the future. This bill works against that principle.