

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Eugene Mahar. I am a Maine licensed Professional Forester, a resident of Hermon and the Timberland Region Manager - Maine for LandVest, Inc. I am writing you in opposition to LD 125 *An Act to Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture*. I have 20 plus years in the forest industry and in my current role as Timberland Region Manager for LandVest, Inc. I represent and have management responsibilities for approximately 1.25 million acres of forestlands in the state of Maine covering a wide range of ownerships sizes and management objectives.

I find this bill extremely unnecessary as were the previous versions of this bill discussed last session; it appears to be a solution looking for a problem that does not exist. As you consider LD 125, I ask you to please keep the following points in mind:

- A Report to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee on Findings Pursuant to PL 2019, Chapter 84 ordered by the 129th Legislature confirmed that Maine's laws are being carefully followed. The SCS Global Services audit report showed that aerial applications are safe and in compliance with all relevant laws. SCS Global Services reported that "Overall, there is a consistently high level of compliance with applicable Bureau of Pesticide Control regulatory requirements and pesticide label law" and concluded that "The State of Maine regulatory framework, within which aerial application of herbicides in forest operations takes place, is functioning as designed." In fact, the best management practices developed and used by forest managers for aerial application of herbicides for silvicultural treatments exceed what is currently required.
- The practice of forestry is a science. Maine laws that regulate forestry practices do not necessarily reflect and promote sound scientific based management and passing this bill would perpetuate that problem. This practice has been a proven and safe silvicultural and agricultural tool for decades that is used to improve growth and productivity of forest stands, similarly to the way one thins/weeds undesirable plants in a garden.
- Banning aerial applications of herbicides will shut down tree planting programs thus eliminating a management tool for foresters engaged in natural regeneration management. The escalating challenge to protect trees from invasive species and native pests is also threatened by this ban.
- The use of herbicides for forestry is regulated by the EPA and Maine DEP. There are strict guidelines for rates of application and the types of sites in which the application can be applied.

The effects of glyphosate have been extensively studied by the EPA, other federal agencies, and other government and scientific organizations worldwide, and it's considered safe. The outright ban on all synthetic herbicides eliminates any options because there are no organic treatment options.

There are many aspects of LD 125 that are not needed and are not based in science. As Maine looks towards its forests (both private and publicly owned) as a solution towards its climate goals, why ban a tool that is being used judiciously to improve productivity? It's a solution looking for a problem that doesn't exist and will ultimately harm sound scientific forest management currently underway in Maine. I thank you for your consideration and respectfully ask you to vote ought not to pass on LD 125.

Respectively submitted,

Eugene Mahar

Hermon, ME