

Jim O'Malley
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Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation Committee. My name is Jim O'Malley and I am a resident of Fort Kent. I am submitting testimony as a licensed professional forester and avid Maine recreationist concerning LD 125.

I've managed timberland in north western Maine since 1980. I've had the good fortune to have made a career working for clients who "see the forest beyond the trees" – their pragmatic, conservative land ethic has greatly shaped my own philosophies.

I worked through the budworm salvage years – from Estcourt Station to Ross Lake. I watched healthy, vibrant stands turn grey and supervised the clearcuts. It was a rough time. The response was both predictable and disheartening. The increased sunlight caused a tremendous influx of broad leafed species – dense canopies of raspberry and mountain maple soon carpeted the harvest sites, preventing trees from reseeded.

Thanks to research work pioneered by Dr. Max McCormack and his team at UMO, we're now harvesting trees in many of those clearcuts – thinning once again healthy, vibrant stands of spruce/fir.

Conversely, we're not harvesting in former clearcuts that were not sprayed – those stands simply don't yet have enough merchantable volume.

Chemicals intimidate a lot of people – and to many it would seem impossible that aerial spraying can be done with any degree of precision. I've found those opinions come mostly from folks with little to no work experience in this area.

Modern spray craft rely on sophisticated gps systems – spray lines are delineated and followed generally within sub three-meter accuracy. Current laws are strict – flowing water and property lines are buffered, treatments stop when the wind blows.

Today's forestry chemical use is much like the current strategy for medicines – use the minimal amount necessary to achieve the desired result.

Most of us are exposed to more pesticides in the produce aisle than we are in the woods. As you deliberate this bill, please follow the science.