Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

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BBC Lands LLC
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Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
Innovative Natural Resource Solutions
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Maibec Logging
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Testimony opposing LD 125 An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture

March 2, 2021

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Sen. Dill, Rep. O'Neill, and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, I am Patrick Strauch, executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC). I also am a forester, with a B.S. degree in forest management and master's in silviculture from the University of Maine. I am speaking in opposition to LD 125.

Since 1961, MFPC has represented our state's diverse forest products community, including logging contractors, sawmills, paper mills, biomass energy facilities, pellet manufacturers, manufacturers, and owners of about eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine.

INTRODUCTION

The Council opposes the ban on the aerial spraying of herbicides for the following reasons:

1. Forest treatments using aerial applied herbicides are strictly regulated using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques, Board of Pesticide Control (BPC) Best Management Practices and specific notification requirements (Chapter 51). Most forestland treatments occur only once during the life of the stand (40-80 years).

2. The track record of safety for spray operations is strong and demonstrated in more than three decades of compliance, as well as the 2020 BPC third-party audit of Maine's aerial application program.

3. The ban would shut down investments in planting trees and eliminates a management tool for foresters in natural stand management. Threats like the returning cycle of spruce budworm infestations will require management techniques that protect our spruce and fir resource (i.e., herbicide applications)

4. At a time when landowners are encouraged to accelerate growth of the forest to maximize carbon sequestration, this bill eliminates an important tree growing tool.

THE BOARD OF PESTICIDE CONTROL

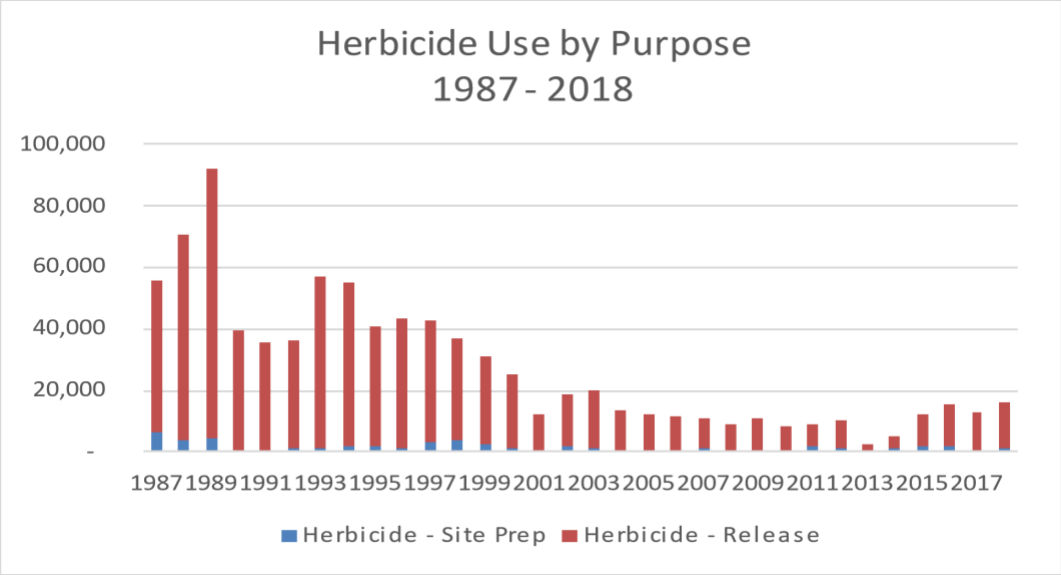
MFPC believes good science can guide the discussion on the use of herbicides in forest management. The Maine Board of Pesticide Control was created by the Legislature to provide scientific review of pesticides with the support from the BPC State Toxicologist. The board is composed of a citizen advisory committee and designed to look after the public safety. The BPC coordinates their program with the US EPA and they should be a focal point in the current policy discussion.

In the 129th Legislature, Sen. Troy Jackson sponsored a bill that was similar to this one, LD 1691 An Act to Ban Use of Aerial Herbicide Spraying for the Purpose of Deforestation. After hours of testimony about the safety, efficacy and necessity of aerial

spraying, the Legislature ultimately approved a resolve to audit aerial spraying and report back.

That **Report to the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee on Findings Pursuant to PL 2019, Chapter 84** confirmed what Megan Patterson, director of the Maine Board of Pesticide Control, and many others had testified. Maine's laws are being carefully followed. The auditors "observed a consistent and genuine effort on the part of forest managers and pesticide applicators/suppliers to minimize reliance on and use of herbicides, principally through thorough planning and integrated pest management."

MFPC believes aerial applications with herbicides requires a professional responsibility to perform operations responsibly and with absolute care to protect public safety. Notification procedures exceed those required by agriculture applications, and advances in spraying technology and GPS navigation systems track flight patterns and spray patterns. We believe the operations audit demonstrates this professional commitment and responsible management.



AERIAL APPLICATIONS OF HERBICIDE IN SILVICULTURE

Maine's forest industry has used this proven and safe silvicultural tool for decades.[1] It is an essential part of forest management, and especially important for control of invasive and other undesirable vegetative competition. The interesting thing about Maine's forest is that our soils have a cache of seeds for a variety plants that can exist for hundreds of years and some tree species sprout producing coppice growth (American beech).

When sunlight hits the forest floor early successional species (i.e., raspberries, pin cherry, grey birch, alder) take over the site and overtop commercial species like red spruce, balsam fir and white pine. It's a balancing act that professional foresters perform in prescribing silvicultural harvest treatments, determining how much sunlight should reach the forest floor before the desired crop species is established and ready to compete with the onslaught of pioneer species. The budworm years were a particular challenge in Maine's spruce/fir forests as large openings were created by the bug and salvage harvesting operations created landscapes of cleared land.

Herbicide application can be timed to release suppressed softwood species, setting back the growth on hardwood species. For example, the spruce budworm affected lands germinated vast areas of raspberries that suppressed

[1] CFRU Research Summary Herbicide Use in Maine. Center for Research on Sustainable Forests. Crsf.umaine.edu

softwood seedlings. This pattern can be seen in Chart I (above), which illustrates herbicide release dating back to 1992. Conifer release was practiced in the past and helps us today by supporting a vibrant sawmill industry.

The budworm is cycling back with moth flights recently spotted in Maine and there are strategies to manage for the event developed by the industry, Maine Forest Service (MFS) and the University of Maine. Herbicide applications need to be retained to ensure long-term wood supply.[2]

This pattern can be seen in Chart I (above), which illustrates herbicide release dating back to 1992. Conifer release was practiced in the past and helps us today by supporting a vibrant sawmill industry. The budworm is cycling back with moth flights recently spotted in Maine and there are strategies to manage for the event developed by the Industry, MFS and UMO. Herbicide applications need to be retained to ensure long-term wood supply.[3]

The chart also shows the current trend of stable usage for site preparation and conifer release. It is not expected that these numbers will increase dramatically prior to any budworm epidemic.

It is also important to note that the 2018 application of aerial applied herbicides was on 16,417 acres.[4] This represents treatments on only 4.79 percent of the total 342,462 acres of harvest. Treatments that protect the early establishment of seedlings that are planted or naturally regenerated generally require a single or sometimes second application in the 40-80 year rotation of tree crops. This is in stark contrast to annual application rates used in the agriculture and home sectors.

Maine's forests represent a shifting mosaic of tree species and harvest prescriptions. Maine's foresters are using integrated pest techniques (IPM) responsibly and in conjunction with a variety of techniques to shape the wood products of the future.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOREST SEQUESTRATION OF CO2

I have been appointed by the Governor to serve on the Climate Change Council and the emphasis in the Lands Subcommittee is to encourage landowners to sequester even more carbon in their forest stands. Dr. Adam Daigneault in his Natural Climate Solutions work[5] presented to the CCC, demonstrated that increased investment in plantations can significantly drive-up rates of sequestration in forest stands. The addition of solid wood products that can sink carbon for lang periods of time, in fact significantly surpassing the sequestration accomplished through forest preservation.

Incentives to increase forest carbon sequestration are part of the current CCC discussions, but this bill sends us in the wrong direction. To obtain this policy objective we need to encourage silvicultural investments in land to maximize the rate of tree growth and production of wood fiber, and this legislation does the opposite by removing an important silvicultural tool.

SUMMARY

Maine landowners are managing the private forest resource responsibly and it is important that they have all the tools available to continue their stewardship. Foresters have a big responsibility to manage forests that supply wood to our wood manufacturing mills, increasing tree growth, sequestering carbon. In addition, they provide recreational opportunities, wildlife diversity and protection of special places, and believe in the opportunity to grow Maine's rural economy. The entire forest products industry, including over 30,000 of people who make a

[2] University of Maine . Coming Spruce Budworm Outbreak, Initial Risk Assessment and PREPARATION & Response Recommendations for Maine's Forestry Community.

[3] University of Maine . Coming Spruce Budworm Outbreak, Initial Risk Assessment and PREPARATION & Response Recommendations for Maine's Forestry Community.

[4] MFS 2018 Silvicultural Activities Report

[5] Adam Daignault. 2020. Maine Forestry and Agriculture Natural Climate Solutions Mitigation Potential. https://umaine.edu/cfru/

good livelihood in our forests and mills, depends upon good, scientific silviculture to prosper.

LD 125 asks you to eliminate an important, safe, and effective tool for no good reason.

I urge you to vote against LD 125.