

Testimony in Opposition to LD-125 “An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture”

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Senator Dill, Representative O'Neill, and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, I am David Wilson, Vice President of Acadian Timber's Katahdin Forest Management Division. I write to you today in strong opposition to LD 125.

The Katahdin Forest Management lands have a long history of providing forest products to the region. On our 300,000 acres of forest located in the Millinocket area, annual glyphosate use occurs on only a fraction of 1% of the area and is only used in cases where we need to give our planted softwood trees a better chance to grow and in places where we need to promote the growth of naturally occurring sugar maple seedlings from undesirable competition.

The use of herbicides for forestry is regulated by the EPA and Maine DEP, including rates of application, and allowed application sites. Herbicide applicators are licensed and very professional in their approach to treating the identified sites. The effects of glyphosate and other synthetic herbicides have been studied by the EPA and federal agencies and it's considered suitable for forestry use in addition to use on food crops. Additionally, 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.

Banning aerial applications of herbicides will effectively eliminate the tree planting on Maine's commercial forestlands as the ability to protect trees that contribute positively to climate change mitigation will be lost. Herbicides are an effective 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.

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 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. Therefore we oppose LD 125.

Sincerely,



Acadian Timber, Katahdin Forest Management
David Wilson, Vice President