

James White  
Piscataquis County Commissioners

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is James White. I am the chairman of the Piscataquis County Board of Commissioners.

I would urge you to vote ought to pass on this bill, LD 324. However, the percentage of land in both cases 33% statewide and 50% in any given county is still an extremely large portion of the tax base.

I would urge you to take Atkinson into consideration when just under 50% of the land in Atkinson was put into tree growth, the town soon became insolvent and de-organized. For a county to lose 50% of its tax base and move that 50% to the column of taxpayer burden, it would be virtually impossible for the county to maintain its core obligations. We would strongly urge you to consider amending the percentages down by half, 16% and 25% respectively.

We are very fortunate in Piscataquis to live in what many of us believe to be one of the most beautiful parts of our country. Having more unorganized territory than any other county east of the Mississippi, the potential for our tax base to be devastated by a large portion of our land becoming publically owned is a real concern.

Historically this area has been a balance of industry, like that of Puritan Products that has been so crucial to the fight against Covid 19 and the working forests that have supplied businesses such as Puritan Products with the resources harvested right here in our state. Along with our vacation/tourist activities such as the \$130,000,000 project that is happening right now on Big Moose Mnt.

Thank you for hearing our concerns,  
James White