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From: gerritt@mindspring.com
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2026 11:14 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Greg Gerritt
Subject: Testimony on H 7914

To the House Environment and Natural Resources committee,

I believe H 7914 is a flawed bill that should not be passed. The first thing I noticed was that it is based on faulty assumptions as the two sections labeled 5 in the Findings are not true. The percentage of natural forest on state lands is not diminishing rapidly and state management plans do not allow for unlimited logging. With such blatant misstatements in a bill that was put in by request, you have to question the motives of the people who asked the bill to be introduced. Eventually you will get to the definitions of old growth forests that are at the heart of the bill. The definition is seriously flawed. I love old growth forests, and forests well on their way to becoming old growth forests should be preserved, but there is so little old growth and near old growth in RI, especially on state lands, that it makes a joke of forest preservation to write a bill based on this premise.

Then there are the definitions. Creating a non opening in a forest over 1/5 of an acre is being banned. That is an impossible standard. It would mean that you could not remove two large trees that are near each other. You could not create an opening large enough to turn around a skidder. Having worked on forest issues for 40 years, and done some logging in my youth, this law would make it impossible for a modern logger to operate, period end of sentence, which is what the real goal of the bill is. Also in the definitions, it states that you cannot remove more than 20% of a stand in 30 years, while in reality, New England forests grow about 2% a year in volume, so over a 30 year period a cut twice what would be allowed would still mean there was more wood than when you started.

Banning even aged logging is a joke, a cruel joke in that it means cutting 3 or 4 larger trees in a stand is banned. It bans salvage logging for damage from invasive insects as well.

How will coordinate the natural heritage system is also a bit vague. This is a role that should be directly in DEM as part of the forestry division, but the author seems hell bent on dismantling DEM for some reason.

I have also talked to some of the supporters off this bill and discussed the role of a forest products industry in rural communities. The supporters are in denial about the importance of forest industries to rural economies. They are also more than happy to cause overcutting in other places by their refusal to allow RI forests to meet the need for wood that we have here in Rhode Island. Clearly the forest of the world are being overcut, and the demand for wood in Rhode Inland and around the world continues to go up. The result is massive global deforestation. But we in RI need to accept that if we are to use wood we should meet a greater percentage of our use of wood from RI forests if we are to alleviate the demand for wood in places that are experiencing rapid deforestation.

For the above reasons I ask that the legislature reject H 7914.

Greg Gerritt Providence RI