

Dear House Finance Committee

This is Barry Schiller writing to oppose bill H8152 to give new tax breaks and zoning rights to the logging industry.

Of course every industry would like to be exempt from sales and use taxes, but the state also needs all its revenue for multiple purposes including health care, education, housing and homelessness, transportation, victims rights, and more. There is no real reason to single out the forestry industries for new tax breaks, especially as their activities raise questions about environmental impact. Though Federal land, what there is of it in RI, is not affected by the bill, and on private land the owners have incentives to be prudent, but on state land there are serious issues. Prioritizing logging activities on public land downgrades other uses including recreation, carbon storage, passive enjoyment. Logging inevitably stresses birds and wildlife, already under serious threats and decline. Further, solar "farms" are already replacing woodlands adding to the stress. Let's not accelerate the loss of trees on public lands by giving special tax breaks for cutting down trees.

Thank you for considering my views.

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