

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in strong opposition to H 8152, the so-called "Forest Parity Act," which would expand the timber industry in Rhode Island by making it more profitable to clearcut forests on both public and private land, including for solar development.

As a Charlestown, RI resident, I live among the forests this bill would put at risk. But I also bring a professional perspective that is directly relevant to this committee's deliberations. I am the Founder and CEO of the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy, a national nonprofit that supports Tribes and Alaska Native Villages across America in building solar and other clean energy infrastructure. We do this work every day without clearing a single forest. It can be done. A clearcutting forests is not necessary for clean energy development.

Indigenous peoples have known since time immemorial that forests are living systems that are interconnected, sacred, and essential to the health of everything and *everyone* around them. That knowledge, accumulated over thousands of years of careful stewardship, tells us what modern science and simple math confirm - the economics of clearcutting are a mirage. Corporations reap fleeting financial gain extracted from our at permanent ecological cost, leaving communities to bear the consequences for generations.

H 8152 would remove use and sales taxes on forest product equipment - - chainsaws, logging trucks, sawmills - - effectively subsidizing destruction with public money. It would expand logging into all zoning districts, stripping communities of local protection. It would devastate biodiversity, spread invasive species, and create prime tick habitat in a state already burdened by Lyme disease. It would release carbon stored for generations back into the atmosphere, accelerating the climate crisis Rhode Island is working to address. And it would replace cool, resilient forest with a dry, debris-laden landscape filled with invasive underbrush and flammable slash - - a fire hazard that puts lives directly at risk, not to mention the financial consequences of wildfires.

The responsibility to protect this land for future generations lies with you. Please rise to this moment, and resist the ploys of special interests...and choose the history your descendants will be proud of.

Vote no on H 8152.

Sincerely,

Chéri Smith
Charlestown, RI



**ALLIANCE
FOR TRIBAL
CLEAN ENERGY**



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