

Against H 8152 Relating to Agriculture and Forestry

My name is Jessie Kingston, retired. I live in Providence. I am testifying in opposition to H8152.

It is difficult to disagree with the concluding declaration in this bill as quoted below (all italics are mine) if it stood alone :

That it is in the public interest to encourage the *preservation of* farm, forest, and open 6 space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm and forest products close 7 to the metropolitan areas of the state, to *conserve the state's natural resources*(1) That it is in the public interest to encourage the *preservation of* farm, forest, and open 6 space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm and forest products close 7 to the metropolitan areas of the state, to *conserve the state's natural resources*

My objections is the twice used phrases regarding “preservation of” and “conserve the state’s natural resources” used in the same breath as “forest products” . This is misleading because the bill’s own definitions means that logging or cutting down of the trees or “forest product operations” would first have to be done in order to obtain “forest products”. Logging is certainly not preservation or conservation of natural resources by any stretch of the imagination.

Euphemising logging of trees awkwardly as “forest product operations” as well as trying to associate logging with agriculture are both also misleading. Of the 18 possible uses of forest “products” listed in the copy and paste of the bill below, a full 17 depend on first cutting down trees. Only one has any conceivable relation to agriculture: berries to be picked from unknown varieties of trees.

"Forest product operations" means any and all trade occupations involving the 11 harvesting, production, maintaining, and sale of forest products originating in the state, including, 12 but not limited to: 13 (i) Arboriculture and logging; and 14 (ii) Kiln drying, operations of firewood, saw milling, lumber, pallets, biochar, mulch, 15 compost, biomass, wood chips, saw dust, timbers, posts, beams, shingles, and artisan tree carvings, 16 seasonal greens and berries.

I agree that

That it is in the public interest to prevent the forced conversion of farm, forest, and open 10 space land to more intensive (...). incompatible with their preservation as farm, forest, and 12 open space land.

But this bill, by making more logging operations cheaper everywhere in RI does not serve the state public interest. The bill claims to be environmental but as to “forest product operations” it is the exact opposite.

Please do not pass this bill as currently written.