

Dear Committee members, my name is Phyllis Buckley, and I am a concerned citizen about RI protecting forests and biodiversity. I am writing in strong opposition to H 8152, the Forest Parity Act, a bill that would

create a publicly subsidized timber industry in Rhode Island.

This bill, which would make it more profitable to log, including clearcut, forests in the state by

removing the use and sales tax on forest product machinery and expanding logging to all zoning

districts, is no more than a timber industry expansion bill.

Last year, this bill, numbered H 5098 in 2025, passed into law but was amended after much public outcry over the language that would have created a publicly subsidized timber industry.

H5098Aaa.pdf

Why is this bill, now H 8152, which resembles the original unamended version of H 5098, being

reconsidered?

While this legislation claims to be environmental, there is nothing environmental about it.

Logging, especially clearcutting, does not make a forest healthy. It destroys biodiversity, killing

many of the animals that live there. It creates a fire hazard through the flammable wood slash left

behind after the logging operation. The opened up forest canopy allows more sunlight to reach

the forest floor making the forest floor dry, and allows more wind to blow through the forest due

to the wider holes in the canopy from the cut trees, increasing the risk of fire in the logged areas.

Logging also contributes to Climate Change through the carbon released from the logged trees.

The 2023 Exeter wildfire started in an area that was clearcut logged a few years prior. If this

legislation is passed, it would increase the risk of fire for residents living near logged forests.

While the bill states it wouldn't apply to forestry operations conducted in a malicious or negligent manner, or that violates state or federal law, that is difficult to prove. A logger could

claim they are clearcutting a forest to improve habitat while they are in fact destroying it.

They could claim the trees in the forest are all diseased or dead and then clearcut the forest, even

though scientists disagree. According to leading experts in Forest Ecology, Dr. David Foster and

Dr. David Orwig of Harvard, it is ecologically better to leave a forest with diseased or dead trees

alone to naturally regenerate than to log it, which would cause more damage.

Loggers could claim they are clearcutting a forest for fire prevention, despite the fact logging

itself makes a wildfire more likely than leaving the forest alone, even if it has dead trees, as

Harvard Ecologists found the dead trees don't pose a major fire hazard in the long run.

Regarding state and federal law, forest clearcutting and most forms of destructive logging are

currently legal and actively practiced by tree and logging companies contracted by the state. This bill also would be in conflict with the 2021 Act on Climate through the carbon emissions

that would be released which result in net carbon loss.

Very little carbon of the original tree is contained in wood products, and that carbon is eventually

released, especially in short lived products like woodchips, mulch, and firewood that most of the

logged trees on state-owned land are turned into.

Logged trees sent to biomass Power Plants, including trees from state land, release carbon

immediately.

I ask the Committee to not pass this anti-environmental bill.

Thank you for being good stewards of our environment. It is essential to protect our environment for the future of our planet. Please do not put profit over life. Your care and concern are appreciated.

Phyllis Buckley

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