

Testimony in opposition to S2546: State Forests and Forestry Projects

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To: Chair DiPalma and the Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee

Please oppose S2546. State resources are precious and should be used to yield results for the greatest needs. I believe additional DEM staff positions would better serve the public in the areas of compliance and enforcement. It often takes years to stop companies from polluting, creating dangerous situations in Providence port, etc. This bill is vague – what are ‘forestry projects’? Are these ‘projects’ ones that advantage the public’s good by conserving forest lands, or do they advantage those who wish to log more of our state’s woodlands? Logging should not be facilitated by DEM until they have mapped our forests for areas that should not be logged, i.e. mature growth, habitat for threatened species, etc. DEM has spent months creating a survey of species in need of greatest conservation and it is very thorough, but it does not denote exactly where all of these species are found on state land. This type of mapping would be another better use for additional DEM staff positions and that would be much applauded. This open-ended, vague bill has been introduced several years. Why? What is the real goal of such a bill? The potential for reducing habitat, the potential for reducing tree canopies which protect soil health, ground water, etc.; the potential for releasing more carbon into our ever increasing polluted air is great and is quite curious... as this bill has been introduced for several years, why haven’t the specifics of its intention been denoted?