

Dear Committee members,

I am writing in strong opposition to **S 3182**, the Forest Parity Act, a bill which 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.

Why is this bill, now **S 3182**, 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.
 - 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.
- Logging also contributes to **Climate Change** through the carbon released from the logged trees.

While the bill states it wouldn't apply to forestry operations conducted in a malicious or negligent manner, or which violates State or Federal law, that would be 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 University, it is ecologically better to leave a forest with diseased or dead trees alone to naturally regenerate than to log it, which would ensure 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 University Ecologists found that dead trees don't pose a major fire hazard in the long run.

With regards to 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 of Rhode Island.

This bill also would be in conflict with the 2021 Act on Climate through the carbon emissions which would be released resulting 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 which are sent to biomass Power Plants, including trees from state land, release carbon immediately.

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

Sincerely,
Karen Berg
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