

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to voice my vociferous opposition to S 3182, the Forest Parity Act, which would expand the Timber industry in the state by making it more profitable to clearcut forests on both public and private land, including for solar.

S 3182 removes the use and sales tax on forest product equipment including chainsaws, logging trucks, sawmills, etc.

S 3182 would also expand the zoning of where logging would be allowed to take place in ALL zoning districts.

Destructive logging destroys biodiversity, spreads invasive species, creates tick habitat, releases most of the carbon stored in a forest into the atmosphere as air pollution contributing to climate change, and creates a fire hazard. I hike in Arcadia Management Area regularly and am appalled at the destruction I have seen along many of the trails I have hiked, all as a result of current DEM policy that allows clearcutting. Trails that used to meander through lush, damp forested areas are now baking in the sun and are far from welcoming to humans or wildlife. Our forests should be protected and clearcutting should be prohibited, not encouraged. Selective logging is a reasonable option that would still allow for some logging of public management areas.

Rhode Island's Natural Areas Protection Act of 1993 was intended to provide the "highest level of protection to the state's most environmentally sensitive natural areas" and to "promote the health and welfare of the people of Rhode Island by promoting the preservation of areas of unique natural interest." Allowing, encouraging, and incentivizing the clearcutting of public land runs contrary to the Act and not good for the citizens of RI, the living creatures in the state, or the natural environment.

Logging destroys cool, damp forests and replaces it with dry forests filled with invasive underbrush and flammable wood slash on the forest floor. This increases the risk of wildfires and endangers people's lives by the increased logging creating a more fire prone landscape.

I live in Hopkinton, RI and have seen first-hand the level of destruction clearcutting has done to my town, in the name of industrial-level solar generation. We, as a state, should be working to be mitigate the long-term implications of clearcutting forests if we want to have any chance of limiting what could be catastrophic outcomes of climate change in our state. We should be a leader in this area.

Please do NOT pass this un-environmental bill.

Sincerely,
Tammy King Walsh
Hopkinton, RI