

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB4106

Honorable Members of the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural  
Resources, and Water,

Today, I write to express my wholehearted support for House Bill 4106, a landmark piece of legislation that promises to revolutionize the way we approach forestry management in our state. This Act is not merely a policy change; it is a bold step towards creating a harmonious balance between our economic needs and the preservation of our natural resources for generations to come.

At its core, HB4106 seeks to entrust the State Forester with the critical responsibility of establishing sustainable harvest levels for timber on state forestland. This is a significant shift towards ensuring that our forest resources are not just exploited for short-term gains but are managed with a vision for long-term sustainability and ecological balance. By developing a timber inventory model, we are moving towards a data-driven approach that allows us to understand and respect the limits of our natural world.

Moreover, the Act's directive for the State Forester to sell timber at these sustainable levels is a testament to our commitment to responsible stewardship. It ensures that our forest management practices are aligned with the principles of conservation while also supporting the economic vitality of our communities. The annual reporting on timber sales relative to the sustainable harvest level, along with the mechanism to address any shortfall in timber sales, embodies transparency and accountability in our actions.

Perhaps most importantly, HB4106 empowers individuals and communities by conferring standing on certain persons to challenge failures in addressing timber sale shortfalls. This provision is a profound acknowledgment of the collective responsibility we share in safeguarding our environment. It also reinforces the democratic principle that governance should be participatory and inclusive, with the welfare of the many taking precedence over the interests of a few.

The Act's requirements for the adoption of sustainable harvest levels, forest management plans, and related policy documents by rule, along with the establishment of criteria for judicial review, are crucial for ensuring that our forest management practices are not just effective but also equitable and just. These measures provide a framework for governance that is both flexible and robust,

capable of adapting to the changing needs of our society while upholding the highest standards of environmental stewardship.

The appropriation of funds to the State Forester out of the General Fund for developing a timber inventory model and a sustainable harvest level is a wise investment in our future. It signifies a commitment to not only preserve our natural heritage but also to harness its potential in a manner that is sustainable and equitable.

In conclusion, HB4106 is a visionary piece of legislation that embodies the principles of responsible management, sustainability, and equity. It charts a course towards a future where economic development and environmental preservation go hand in hand, ensuring that the bounties of our natural world are available for all, now and in the future. I urge you to support this Act, for it is not just a policy decision; it is a moral imperative towards creating a just, equitable, and sustainable society.

Thank you for your time and consideration.