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On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB4106

Testimony in Support of the Proposed Bill on Sustainable Timber Harvest Levels

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

I write to you today in enthusiastic support of the proposed legislation directing the State Forester to establish sustainable harvest levels for harvesting timber on state forestland, alongside the development of a timber inventory model. This initiative represents a significant step forward in ensuring the health and sustainability of our state's forest resources, which are invaluable not only for their ecological benefits but also for their role in supporting local economies and communities.

The directive for the State Forester to develop a timber inventory model is particularly commendable. Such a model is critical for making informed decisions that balance the need for economic development with the imperative to preserve our natural heritage for future generations. By basing timber harvest levels on a comprehensive understanding of forest dynamics, this legislation ensures that economic activity does not come at the expense of environmental stewardship.

Furthermore, the requirement for the State Forester to offer timber for sale at the sustainable harvest level, coupled with the mandate for annual reporting and addressing any shortfall in timber sales, introduces a level of transparency and accountability that has been sorely needed in the management of our state forests. It ensures that forest management practices are not only sustainable but also responsive to the needs and concerns of the community.

The provision granting standing to certain persons to challenge a failure to address a shortfall in timber sales is a particularly progressive measure. It empowers citizens and communities to hold the government accountable, ensuring that the principles of sustainable forest management are not merely aspirational but are actively upheld.

Moreover, the appropriation of funds from the General Fund for the development of a timber inventory model and sustainable harvest levels demonstrates a commendable commitment to investing in the future of our forests. It acknowledges that sustainable forest management is not just a matter of regulatory oversight but also requires the allocation of resources to support these critical activities.

In conclusion, this legislation represents a holistic approach to forest management, one that recognizes the complex interdependencies between economic development, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. It sets a precedent for how we can manage our natural resources responsibly, ensuring that they continue to provide for our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

I urge you to support this bill, not just as a matter of environmental policy, but as a commitment to the principles of equity, sustainability, and responsible stewardship of our shared natural resources.

Respectfully,

Devon Lawson