

January 27, 2026

Representative Robert Harb, chairman
NH House of Representatives Resources, Recreation, and Development Committee
Room 228, Granite Place
Concord, NH 03301

RE: Oppose HB 1397

Representative Harb,

I have been a consulting forester in New Hampshire for 40 years, working with a wide variety of forest landowners, and am very familiar with the Intent To Cut and Report of Cut process under the timber yield tax law, RSA 79.

I oppose HB 1397 for the following reasons:

- The Intent To Cut is a tax document relative to timber yield tax assessments. It is not a planning and zoning document that normally requires abutter notification.
- There is no statute that provides for public comment to be used for approval or denial of an Intent To Cut.
- Under RSA 79, the only reasons that municipal officials cannot sign an Intent To Cut is if a bond is required, or if the landowner is delinquent on timber yield taxes or property taxes.
- Timber harvesting is a private property right, as affirmed in RSA 672:1, IIIc, which states that forestry activities shall not be unreasonably limited by use of municipal powers.
- This bill provides for public comments upon the filing of an Intent To Cut but says nothing about what the municipal officials should do with those comments, if anything.
- RSA 79 requires municipal officials to sign an Intent To Cut within 15 days of receipt. That time period was instituted for some very good reasons. A 30 day “comment period” prior to signing goes against that statute.
- This abutter notification is an unnecessary and additional work burden on municipal officials.
- This abutter notification is an unnecessary and additional cost burden on forest landowners.

For all of these reasons I oppose HB 1397 and ask your committee to kill it. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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