

HB 1691 Testimony

The NH Current Use law as currently written has been critically important and effective in helping to preserve NH's character and maintain NH's economies, especially related to tourism, recreation, forestry and agriculture. This bill would radically diminish these significant benefits. **Consequently, I strongly oppose this legislation and request that the Committee kill this bill.** The Current Use law as it now stands is not broken and does not need to be fixed.

I own a 240 acre family farm in Milan growing vegetables, managing a woodlot, and maintaining open space in support of wildlife, recreation, and our natural environment while helping to support multiple family members. Without the provisions of the Current Use law as it now exists, our multi-generational farm would no longer exist. The changes proposed in HB 1691 would likely mean we would no longer be able to keep this farm.

Our land although one piece, is considered two lots since that is how Milan's tax maps are organized based on paper, not geography. Under I (a), we would have to give up current use status on half our operation; that does not any make sense. Neighbors with larger farms have their operation spread over greater acreage and being taxed at highest and best use rates for large portions of their land will put them out of business.

While we follow organic practices, the provision of III (b) will limit our ability to address critical disease, pest and soil health issues that can arise in farming. Sections III (b) and (c) would put many of my fellow farmers out of business as they would not be able to convert their operations to comply nor pay the resulting higher taxes that would result from this bill.

Good forestry management is not rocket science; it is more complicated and requires a full range of management techniques. To the uninitiated, clearcutting is always bad, but this is incorrect. There are times when because of tree health,

stand makeup, soil conditions and so forth, this technique is beneficial and appropriate. Additionally, small clearcuts can be essential for promoting wildlife, forest regeneration and forest health. Section III(d) prohibiting clearcutting is short-sighted and just plain wrong for good forestry.

Finally, this bill is contrary to the long-cherished New Hampshire characteristics of local control and individual freedom to live our lives and operate our businesses with as little government interference as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael E. Galuszka

Chandler Brook Farm

Milan, NH