

HB 1691 Testimony

Having read the proposed changes to Current Use Law, the first unanswered question that came to mind is **What is the problem we are trying to remedy?**

I have lived in Milan, Coos County for the past 30 years. While living here as well as other states prior to moving here, my career was based on forest management for a variety of uses. I fail to see problems associated with the current law regarding Current Use.

Why is there a limit on the number of acres that can be enrolled in the program? Why cannot one landowner have more than one lot enrolled? Why is there an outright ban on clearcutting? What is the concern with regenerating trees after harvest? Replacement of trees after clearcutting is almost never a problem. Although I acknowledge that some land owners use that indiscriminately and without apparent understanding of sound forestry, banning it completely makes no sense. In most of New England, especially in the northern forest, clearcutting is essential for healthy populations of many animals, including white tailed deer and many species of birds. In the last several years, several large, highly visible clearcuts have appeared in Milan. Most of them are the result of people from outside Coos County who bought land, hired someone to strip all vegetation. Those people are not, and have never been, part of this community.

Have the bill sponsors (from two heavily urbanized counties), or members of the committee spent any time discussing unintended consequences should this bill move forward?

Although I personally am not a proponent of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, what are we trying to mitigate with that language? I understand many areas are now faced with the dilemma of forever chemicals. If we want to regulate that use, state it clearly in a bill that is not attached to Current Use.

I noted the statement about introducing new species into our environment. I support that effort but again ask if you have considered unintended consequences. The State of New Hampshire, through its Fish and Game agency, introduced wild turkeys into northern New Hampshire where they have not historically been present. If this bill passes, can I sue the State for introducing an invasive species into my area, a species that routinely destroys my blueberry crop and takes dust baths in my garden? A species that has caused me to expend substantial resources to protect my property but for which the State will not provide mitigation.

As it now stands, this bill is ambiguous as to its purpose, environmentally inappropriate, and downright scary. I urge the committee to "kill" this bill. Until a problem is described that demonstrates how the wording in this bill can provide a solution, it comes across as the work of people with no experience with forested land management or agriculture but with an intense desire to control the life of those of us who live beyond their local area.

George R. Pozzuto
Milan, New Hampshire