



GREEN TIMBER CONSULTING FORESTERS, INC.

GREEN TIMBER TREE FARM GROUP

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Green Timber



Consulting
Foresters, Inc.

December 5th, 2017

Re: HB 5001; HB 5002

House Natural Resources Committee Members:

I am writing in regards to HB 5001 and HB 5002 introduced by Representative Daire Rendon regarding the voluntary registration of professional foresters. As a consulting forester in the Upper Peninsula, I support this legislation.

In early 2014 several bills (SB 481; 484, HB 4379; 4380) narrowly passed the house and senate that were intended to deregulate the profession of forestry. The forest industry was strongly opposed to the legislation and felt that the bills would have a definite negative effect on our private forestlands and forest industry in Michigan. Governor Snyder agreed with the forest industry and chose to veto the legislation. In his letter to the legislature he expressed his support for the profession of forestry and described professional foresters as *"a critical link in the state's forest economy"*. He went on to say *"I am convinced that improving--not eliminating--Michigan's Licensed Forester statute is necessary. We need to assure both the public and private landowners that services are being provided by professionals with appropriate education, skills, and a commitment to a code of ethics."* The Governor concluded his letter by requesting that *"Legislation transferring the oversight of professional foresters to the DNR be adopted as soon as practical. I have directed the DNR to work with the legislature in crafting an oversight role that modernizes and elevates Michigan's regulatory system for professional forestry."*

In response to comments/requests made in the Governor's letter, the forest industry has been working together with the DNR to modernize and elevate Michigan's regulatory system for the profession of forestry. The goal is to develop a voluntary program that ensures when a landowner seeks the services of a "Registered Forester", they can be confident the forester has the appropriate education, skills, and a commitment to a code of ethics. The strengthened requirements will help ensure that our forestlands are sustainably managed by qualified professionals and will help protect private landowners from unscrupulous timber buyers/loggers that may prey on them.

The forest products industry contributes \$20 billion per year to Michigan's economy, and employs more than 96,600 people in diverse positions. Nearly 65% of Michigan's 20 million acres of forestlands are privately owned. The vast majority of the privately owned property is classified as Non-Industrial Private Forestland (i.e. owned by individuals/families). I believe that this improved registered forester program will ensure the sustainability of Michigan's forest resources.

Sincerely,

Justin M. Miller, ACF

President

Michigan Registered Forester # 978