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SENATE FORESTRY COMMITTEE PASSES REVISED MANAGED FOREST LAW BILL
Managed Forest Law Needs Change to Keep Wisconsin's Timber Industry Competitive

At its hearing on January 14, the Senate's Forestry Committee, on a 3 to 2 vote, passed an amended version of Senate Bill 434, making it available for approval by the full Senate. Voting for the bill were Senators Tiffany, Roth, and Moulton. Opposing the bill were Senators Vinehout and Wirsch.

Prior to passage, the bill was amended by making revisions which included language that would restore the ability of landowners to lease their closed MFL land.

Other provisions of the bill, which was supported by the Wisconsin Alliance of Forest Owners, include:

- 1) Eliminating the 5% yield tax landowners must pay on timber harvested.
- 2) Directing all of the closed acreage fees to local governments. Currently these property taxes paid to local governments are sent back to the state where they are deposited in the state's forestry account.
- 3) Limiting the early withdrawal penalty to a maximum of 10 years for landowners owning less than 1000 acres.
- 4) Simplifying sales of land enrolled in the MFL by allowing landowners to sell any part of a parcel of land, as opposed to entire parcels, as long as the remaining land meets the eligibility requirements for MFL designation.
- 5) Allowing additions of 3 or more acres of contiguous land to an existing MFL order.
- 6) Allowing withdrawal of lands that were damaged by natural disasters or are unsuitable for production of merchantable timber without penalty.
- 7) Increasing to 320 acres the amount of land any one landowner can close to public access within any one municipality.
- 8) Provisions identifying that the MFL order is a contract with the landowner.
- 9) Providing opportunities for limited land withdrawals, rather than complete parcels.
- 10) Requiring that landowners with "open" MFL lands provide the general public with foot access to those parcels.

The Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry is expected to vote on its companion bill in the near future.



The Wisconsin Alliance of Forest Owners wishes to acknowledge in particular Senator Tiffany, Representative Mursau, and Representative Czaja for the hard work they've put in to help bring this significant piece of legislation closer to passage.

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