

Dear

The 2018-2019 Executive Budget included funding for the Empire Forests for the Future Initiative (EFFI). As a constituent (phrase to be included only if you are one), and as one of the 500,000 citizens who own and take care of more than 75% of our state's forested landscape, I want to express my strong support for five of the six components of EFFI, and my strong objection to the sixth.

Our forests provide irreplaceable public, environmental, wildlife and economic benefits to the state, and it is appropriate and necessary for public support to ensure that this resource remains available to future generations. Forestlands are not generally eligible for agricultural exemptions, so the Forest Property Tax Law reforms included in EFFI are critical in order to keep forests as forests. Also, because of threats to forest health, including invasive species and climate change, the Forest Stewardship Incentive Program included under EFFI is of great importance in the effort to save our forests.

I also support the EFFI proposals regarding the Right to Practice Forestry Law, Community Forests and the State Procurement Preference for wood products produced within the state.

However, as critical as these five provisions of the EFFI are for NY forests and those who maintain them, I strongly object to the EFFI provision regarding mandatory advance Timber Harvest Notification for the following reasons:

- Best Management Practices covering many aspects of a commercial timber harvest are already addressed in existing Federal, State and Local regulations.
- The DEC has not been able to satisfactorily articulate the need for the information to be derived from such advance notification, nor the reasons why alternative sources for such information are insufficient.
- The regulation would be extremely burdensome for forest owners, managers and harvesters, and would reduce flexibility in methods and timing of harvests necessitated by market considerations and conditions on the ground, including weather.
- The proposal is the kind of regulation that is perceived to make our state uncompetitive and amounts to an infringement on private property rights.

I urge you to support the EFFI legislation, minus the provision for Commercial Timber Harvest Notification.

Thank you,

Signed