



**TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON  
RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS** State Legislators are considering a bill that would open New Jersey's prized State owned lands to commercial logging, (S1954/A4358, Forest Harvest on State Lands), and

**WHEREAS** New Jersey's State Lands, including its Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and forested Green Acres Lands have been set aside for conservation and recreation purposes, and

**WHEREAS** these forested State lands were paid for and preserved with the support of a trusting public which assumed they would be protected from commercial exploitation, and

**WHEREAS** the towering hardwood trees growing in our State parks and forests contribute a far greater ecological and recreational value to the citizens of the State than they would if they were to be cut and sold as commercial lumber, and

**WHEREAS** according to information provided by the DEP, at the end of the five-year contract for the proposed Forest Harvest Program, a \$2.7 million net operating deficit is projected due to the high cost of oversight, and

**WHEREAS** commercial logging is likely to cause damage to roads, streams, and drainage swales in State lands that will cost money to restore and cause soil compaction and disturbance of the fragile ecosystem on the forest floor that will be impossible to restore, and

**WHEREAS** 37 PhD biologists, forest scientists, and ecologists from across the State have signed onto a letter in opposition to this Bill, agreeing that commercial timber harvesting would be detrimental to the public forests, and

**WHEREAS** this bill does not properly address the most serious threat to today's forests; that common hardwood species such as oaks, hickory, poplar and birch among others, are not regenerating due to high deer densities, and

**WHEREAS**, because of high deer densities, openings in the forest canopy, occurring as a result of timber harvesting, are colonized not by young hardwood trees, but by noxious weeds, typically vines, briars, and invasive plants from Asia, and

**WHEREAS** opening State lands to commercial logging would be detrimental to the flora and fauna, including the threatened and endangered species, that presently inhabit these lands:

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Readington Township Committee hereby finds and declares that the commercial exploitation of public lands that have been set aside for conservation and recreation purposes is a betrayal of the public trust, and

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED***, that the Readington Township Committee urges the legislators of the State of New Jersey to vote NO to S1954/A4358 Forest Harvest on State Lands.

**CERTIFICATION**

**I, VITA MEKOVETZ**, Clerk of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Committee on the 19<sup>TH</sup> day of December, 2011.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of this Township this 20<sup>TH</sup> day of December, 2011.

  
Vita Mekovetz, RMC/MMC/RPPO  
Municipal Clerk

(over please)

Dear New Jersey Legislature:

The above signed biologists, forest scientists, ecologists, and other land use researchers oppose the "Forest Harvest on State Lands" bill that is progressing through the "lame-duck" legislative session. The bill is S1954, and it has passed the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. Its companion, A4358, has also passed the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

The bill speaks toward addressing forest health issues, but it is simply the wrong approach. We are pleased that Senator Bateman has decided to oppose S 1954, even though he initially supported the bill as a co-sponsor in the Senate Environment Committee back in 2010.

The bill seems to have emerged from a two-pronged situation: concern that we need to be creating early successional habitat (shrubby meadows) for game species and a few rare bird species by extensively managing forested lands, combined with a "*belief*" that forests cannot prosper unless they are extensively harvested. This view is espoused by the president of the NJ Forestry Association in its Spring 2011 Newsletter that "*a well-managed forest will go on forever, but a forest left to its own devices will die and become useless to anyone.*" This quote is based simply on outdated, unscientific folklore. It was issued in response to Hunterdon County citizens voicing opposition to a timbering proposal for one of the county's oldest forest tracts, located on county parkland, ostensibly to make the forest "healthy."

As forest scientists, we all agree that our forests face many troubling issues. While our forests have important management needs, we do not believe that the remedy of choice to address our serious forest issues should be a massive harvest program that creates early successional habitat out of intact, closed-canopy, maturing forest. Early successional habitat can be created and managed in existing degraded areas and recently abandoned agricultural lands, not hewn out of intact forest.

The forest harvest program described in this bill will make almost every existing forest problem worse:

- introducing invasive species to new areas, and exacerbating existing invasive species problems by allowing too much sunlight to reach the ground, where deer have removed native shrubs and invasive weeds are waiting to explode into prominence,
- making it even more difficult to preserve our dwindling natural heritage (there are now over 1000 species of rare plants and animals on our state lands, the list is growing rapidly, and VERY FEW of these species will benefit from commercial forestry),
- growing the deer herd even more as a result of over-abundant sunlight reaching the ground and generating an even larger food supply, thus further impacting sensitive species and making it even more unlikely that native woody species will regenerate and outcompete alien invasive species,
- removing huge amounts of sequestered carbon biomass by removing massive canopy trees; even though current research is yielding new understandings toward the importance of these middle-aged forests (they are not old by any stretch). Our forests are now rapidly increasing the rate at which they store soil carbon in the soil, where it can remain sequestered for incredibly long periods of time.

We, the above-signed forest scientists, respectfully urge the legislature to oppose and hold this bill. Please do not move this bill forward. The challenges we face to restore our forests are great, but logging is not the first place to turn for a science-based solution. We respectfully oppose this bill and would be pleased to discuss our most serious forest needs with members of the legislature at any time.

15 December 2011

**New Jersey Biologists, Ecologists, and Forest Scientists OPPOSED to S1954 / A4358  
“Forest Harvest Program on State Land”**

Dr. Joanna Burger, Distinguished Professor of Biology, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, & Natural Resources,  
Rutgers, The State University  
David Ehrenfeld, M.D., Ph.D., Professor II of Biology, Dept of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources,  
Rutgers, The State University  
Charles F. Leck, Ph. D., Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, & Natural Resources,  
Rutgers, The State University  
James A. Quinn, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, & Natural Resources,  
Rutgers, The State University  
John D. Mitchell, Ph.D., Honorary Curator, Institute for Systematic Botany, New York Botanical Garden  
Mary Alessio Leck, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Biology, Rider University  
Walter F. Bien, Ph.D., Director, Laboratory of Pinelands Research, Biology Department, Drexel University  
William Schuster, Ph.D., Executive Director, Black Rock Forest Consortium, Cornwall, NY  
Neil Pederson, Ph.D., Lamont Assistant Research Professor, Tree Ring Laboratory,  
Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory and Columbia University  
Emilie Stander, Ph.D., Ecology, Bridgewater, NJ. AAAS Science Policy Fellow, Natural Resource Mgmt.,  
US Agency for International Development  
Daniela Shebitz, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Kean University  
Dr. Joseph Zurovchak, Associate Professor of Ecology, SUNY Orange (Orange County Community College)  
Dr. Jon Gelhaus, Department of Entomology, Philadelphia Academy of Sciences  
Dr. John Dighton, Professor, Rutgers, the State University  
Michael F. Gross, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Academic Program Development, Professor of Biology  
Georgian Court University  
Amy S. Karpati, Ph.D., Director for Conservation Science, Pinelands Preservation Alliance  
Louis Cantafio, Ph.D., Senior Land Steward, NJ Conservation Foundation  
David LaPuma, PhD, Villas, NJ  
Jean-Marie Hartman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture,  
Rutgers, The State University  
Kerry Barringer, Ph. D., Jersey City, NJ; Research Scientist, Brooklyn Botanic Garden;  
Professor, City University of New York Graduate School  
James C. Lendemer, Ph.D., Institute of Systematic Botany, The New York Botanical Garden  
Dr. Andrew M. Greller, Professor Emeritus, Biology Department, Queens College, CUNY  
Robert F. C. Naczi, Ph.D., Arthur J. Cronquist Curator of North American Botany, New York Botanical Garden  
James Salierno, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology, Department of Biological Sciences  
Fairleigh Dickinson University  
Kristi MacDonald, Ph.D., Science Park High School, Newark, NJ  
Inga LaPuma, Ph.D., Villas, NJ, Postdoctoral Associate, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Dennis M. Gray, Ph.D., Rutgers Pineland Field Station, New Lisbon, NJ  
Matthew Palmer, Ph.D., Columbia University  
Dr. Daniel Druckenbrod, Assistant Professor of Environmental Sciences  
Geological, Environmental and Marine Sciences, Rider University  
Dr. Laura A. Hyatt, Associate Dean for Sciences, Rider University  
Jay F. Kelly, Ph.D., Professor of Biology and Environmental Science, Raritan Valley Community College  
Louise Wootton, Ph.D., Professor of Biology, Director of Sustainability, Georgian Court University  
Sara Webb, Ph.D., Professor of Biology and Director of Environmental Studies, Drew University  
Emile DeVito, Ph.D., Manger of Science and Stewardship, NJ Conservation Foundation  
Frank W. Maurer, Jr., Ph.D., Executive Director, Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy, Davis, CA  
Michael Gochfeld MD, PhD, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Medicine,  
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute.  
Neil Hendrickson, Ph.D., Yale School of Forestry, NE Technical Rep. Bartlett Tree Research Lab (Northeast)