

E-mail dated March 11, 2014

To: The Senate Natural Resources Committee
From: The Vermont Ski Areas Association
Re: S.100 – Forest Integrity

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Draft No. 2.1 of S.100 regarding forest integrity.

Currently for ski areas in the Act 250 process, any construction on forested land already considers and accommodates much of what is spelled out in S.100, e.g. wildlife habitat, bear habitat, wildlife corridors, aesthetic considerations, erosion control with regard to rivers and streams, etc. What is of deep concern in S.100 is the offset requirement of at least four times greater in area than the forestland fragmented by the development. For example, Jay Peak's proposed west bowl expansion would construct ski trails, lifts and associated real estate development on an approximately 400 acre swath of forestland. While the actual construction impact on the forested parcel will likely be closer to 100 acres, the possibility of an offset requirement for the entire 400 acres would mean the acquisition of at least 1,600 acres elsewhere to be permanently conserved (there is not sufficient acreage on-site to accomplish this). This would be an exorbitant increase to the cost for this project. Therefore, VSAA respectfully requests any legislation with regard to forest integrity not include this costly mitigation measure.

Thank you.

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