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To: The Senate Government Operations Committee
Sen. Jeanette K. White, Chair
Sen. Anthony Pollina, Vice Chair
Sen. Christopher Bray
Sen. Joe Benning
Sen. Brian Collamore, Clerk

RE: H. 355

Date: April 11, 2016

I regret that I am unable to testify in person and ask you to vote no on H.355; I will be in Washington DC as one of Vermont's two delegates representing the American Loggers Council. I look forward to meeting with Congressman Welch and staff at the offices of Senator Sanders and the US Forest Service.

I am a mechanized timber harvester and cash crop farmer in Randolph Center. I have farmed my entire life and harvested timber for landowners in the greater Orange County area for nearly twenty years. I am a Vermont Technical College graduate (A.A.S. AgriBusiness Management, 1996), LEAP (Logger Education to Advance Professionalism) certified, Sustainable Forestry Initiative certified and appointed by both Governors Douglas and Shumlin to the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council. I humbly enjoy honors such as being the White River Natural Resources Conservation District's Conservation Farm of the Year 2009 and Vermont Farm Bureau Young Farmer of the Year 2007.

With regard to H355, I believe that adoption of the proposed licensure of foresters in Vermont will effectively terminate what I consider routine daily business practices for timber harvesters. Page 3, line 3 of the bill states: *Forestry services include investigations, consultations, timber inventory, and appraisal, development of forest management plans, and responsible supervision of forest management or other forestry activities on public or private lands.*

I was one of the first timber harvesters in Vermont to have a website and we also have an active Facebook page in order to promote our retail farmstand, forestry business and sustainable practices as a whole. Through any one of these media, and word of mouth, I receive inquiries from landowners interested in having timber on their property evaluated as to whether or not it is a candidate for a harvest.

I respond to these requests, as any contractor would respond to a prospective customer, with prompt and professional service. I ask the landowner about their goals and if they have an existing management plan, provide them with information about requirements for timber harvesting, what they might see or hear during a harvest and other basic information. I always review the ANR's Natural Resource Atlas for pertinent map layers that typically pertain to timber harvesting. If the parameters potentially work for us, I will make a visit to ascertain site conditions, get a feel for accessibility for my equipment and trucks, walk through the woodlot

and use my experience to visually evaluate the timber for its health, quality, volume and distance to the trucking access point. Depending on the landowner's goals, I provide a few recommendations. If the job is too small for us, I will recommend a reputable logger who I think the job might fit. If the goal is long term management of the woodland and no management plan is in place, I recommend at least one forester to develop a plan and if the land is to be cleared for an Agricultural conversion (for pasture or cropland), view enhancement or development, I will often proceed myself with negotiating terms, completing necessary paperwork and an industry standard contract and oversee the harvest myself. If a management plan is in place, we are fully able to interpret the standard and clear language prescribing a harvest under a timeline and conditions that have been previously approved by the County Forester as a part of the Use Value Appraisal program.

Other than "development of forest management plans", I'm regularly involved in all the things defined by H:355 as "forestry" and I do not consider myself a forester. I also believe that a large segment of my peers are performing these same types of consultations, investigations, appraisals of timber inventory and responsible supervision of forest management as part of their day to day businesses. In comparison to my own practices, I believe licensing foresters as defined will have the same effect on me as telling a carpenter that they can't evaluate, give an estimate and proceed with a porch renovation at a prospective client's home because they don't have an engineering license. It has taken me decades to build my customer base and this will greatly impede the way in which I obtain, evaluate and secure potential work for my business by narrowing the channel in which potential jobs can flow through in a timely manner for a business that is extremely weather and market sensitive.

I have heard it said that the need to license foresters and regulate forestry in Vermont is due to "troubling trends" in our forests. I consider myself up to date on forestry practices and keep my ears open and the dialogue going, seeking new ways to ensure we're doing the best job with regard to sustainability. I regularly perform contractual harvests on as wide a spectrum of timber quality and terrain that central Vermont woodland has to offer for consulting foresters whom I consider to be my region's most experienced and reputable. One thing I've never heard from any of them as justification for, or against, a particular harvest, was that there were "troubling trends" in our woods. We have not just been lucky that Vermont has such an abundance of timber. There have been many before me, and now beside me, in this industry who have taken great care to see to it that the planning and work done in our forests has taken the long view and was done with excellence. I see too many unanswered questions about whether this level of regulation is warranted and hear only anecdotal evidence that licensing could drive a measurable level of change in forest health in Vermont. It is yet to be known who it will truly effect and how will it impact and impede the long standing tradition of independent business owners who have the greatest at stake in forest sustainability, as it is our livelihood and our legacy.

As part of a new certification process our operation is in the midst of, I had to list 5-10 of my most recent harvests for a random compliance check of five of the jobs by a third party auditor. There was space enough on the sheet to list my last 16 harvest sites, which I did. They are a mix of the above described work both with, and without, a forester's oversight and I'd be proud to have any one of them evaluated and the determination made, whether by silvicultural and water quality standards or satisfaction of the landowner, which sites did, or didn't, have a forester involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration of written testimony in place of my personal appearance.

Respectfully, Sam Lincoln