

TO: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy  
FROM: Put Blodgett, President, Vermont Woodlands Association  
RE: H.852 and H.857

H.852—good bill—increases tapping fees, allows change in tapping fees by rule as times change, allows Federal and State acquisitions of land to be exempt from Land Use Change Tax, establishes a working group to study succession planning.

H.857—Timber Harvesting Notification Pilot Program

The Vermont Woodlands Association is very pleased with the FINDINGS section.

I would suggest that on page 4, line 8, that “sugar” be changed to “sap” to be consistent with the use of “sap” on page 2, line 5 and page 6, line 4. Sap is a forest product, sugar is a man-made product. The remainder of Policy and Purposes are commendable.

Earlier legislation required notification 7 days prior to commencement of harvesting. This bill has no such prior notification requirement. Therefore, page 9, lines 8-12 all the “technical guidance or information, including: a sample timber sale contract; voluntary harvesting guidelines; guidance on compliance with maintaining water quality protection during a timber harvest; and referral, were applicable, to appropriate natural resource professionals” from the Department could arrive too late to be of any educational use to the landowner. Forest education for landowners is a critical need!

Although it is questionable as to how many landowners will voluntarily fill out the harvest notification paper work, it is a worthwhile pilot program to determine how much information will be collected and how useful it is to FPR.