

Dear Act 250 Committee Members,

One of the best ways to accomplish many of the goals of Act 250, is to sustain a robust and healthy forest and products industry. An industry that provides markets for what grows in the forest, including value added manufacturing of lumber, paper, other wood products, and wood energy. And a livelihood and a way of life for thousands of rural Vermonters, and their families, who, in turn, sustain our rural communities and culture. The people who serve rural fire departments, rescue squads, select boards. planning commissions, boy and girl scouts leadership, church trustees, rotary clubs, 4-H and FFA, and many more types and kinds of volunteer organizations that sustain the compact villages and towns, separated by working farms and forests, that so much of State policy, including Act 250, holds as an ideal. And we should not forget that the working forest is habitat for wildlife, including the game species that capture the attention of so many of these same people earn their living in the forest products industry. It is in this way that the forest products industry, and their people, and the way they sustain rural communities through their work, their lives, and their landthey further and advance the goals of Act 250. And all this rests on a foundation of a And while it is not advisable, in my opinion, to add climate change to the list of Act 250 criteria, it is important to note that our working forests absorb the majority of Carbon Dioxide produced by all the homes, businesses, and vehicles in Vermont. To which should be added the Carbon stored in wood products, made from the product of our working forests.

Therefore, I hope your Committee will consider carefully the unintended adverse effects of overly restrictive Act 250 regulations, that work against the very purpose of those regulations. The undue burdens placed on Mountain View Lumber in West Burke, and more recently, Colton Firewood in Pittsfield, and the Springfield Wood Energy plant, are three classic examples.

Here are three factors upon which I hope you will reflect as you deliberate and recommend.

When Act 250 was created, many, if not most all, of the permits required by the Agency of Natural Resources, did not exist. Now they do exist. These permits should be presumed to satisfy their counterpart criteria in Act 250.

Forest products manufacturing, sometimes is criticized on the grounds of noise and traffic. As Act 250 weighs these objections, I hope the process can counterbalance them with the many benefits that those manufacturers provide, directly and indirectly, to the environment.

Additional regulatory and planning burdens on rural land, direct or indirect, will discourage investment in rural lands, and lead to more fragmentation of those lands, not less.

Thank you,

Bill Sayre