

## **Notes for S.101 Testimony before House Committee on Agriculture & Forestry**

*Jack Bell / General Manager and Co-owner of Long View Forest, Inc.*

10:15am by phone Wednesday March 21, 2018

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about senate bill 101.

My name is Jack Bell and I am co-founder and general manager of a business called Long View Forest based in Westminster VT. We have been in business for 19 years and currently employ 21 full time year-round employees and 7 part-time or seasonal employees. Of these 27 people, 15 work in timber harvesting, 8 work in forest management and invasive plant control, and 4 including myself are office based.

Currently, our foresters manage roughly 20,000 acres of forestland for 200 private landowner clients. Our logging crews harvest approximately 25,000 cords of logs per year for our clients as well as on lands managed by other private and public foresters.

We are incorporated in Vermont and do most of our business in Windham, Windsor, and Orange counties but also work on the NH side of the Connecticut River Valley. We recently purchased a 28-acre brownfield industrial site in Hartland VT and plan to open a second office and shop there in 2018. Our hope is to continue to grow and develop the business for the long term through successive generations.

I'm here today to support passage of senate bill 101. While Long View has not yet had major issues with nuisance complaints or work hour restrictions, I do see this is as a serious risk to our business in the future. Especially in southern VT, we routinely find ourselves "backyard logging" close to houses, busy roads, and recreational areas. The logging equipment we use, called cut-to-length, is well suited to stacking logs in tight places and we are often called specifically to do jobs in these kinds of places.

As an example, last spring and summer we worked on three adjoining properties bordering neighborhoods just outside the village of Bellows Falls. One property was our own 90 acres, the second was a small town forest, and the third was 250 acres owned by a local doctor. About halfway through our work, we were told by a friendly neighbor that a not-so-friendly neighbor had started a Facebook group specifically to lodge complaints about the noise and truck traffic. This was after I had gone door to door introducing us to all the neighbors (16 direct abutters) and hosted a Saturday field tour of our work for anyone interested. When I heard about the Facebook group, I got in touch with the road foreman for Bellows Falls to see if everything was ok. He confirmed he'd had some complaints but that everything was ok for finishing work and luckily nothing more came of it to my knowledge.

The biggest problems we have had all relate to attempts by towns to restrict truck permits beyond the normal standards from the state. I can think of three different situations in the towns of Woodstock, Andover, and Newfane where the restrictions (if they had stood when we pushed back) would have meant not being able to do the planned projects at all because trucking costs would have then been too high.

I am in favor of passing a right to forestry law now before these problems grow and impact everyone involved in Vermont's wood products supply chain.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer questions if you have any.

## “Backyard Logging” Examples



The harvester shown here is working directly behind the neighborhood outlined on this property map from the Village of Bellows Falls VT.



On the left is a truck road we had to build next to and around a house that got built where the landing used to be for a 100 acre property we manage. On the right is a “roadside” landing just off a very busy state highway.