

Thank you for this time to testify.

I provided more detailed testimony to **Rep Partridge**; but would like to provide some perspective and then make myself available for any questions you might have.

**\*Stowe** has been a leader in **environmental conservation**. More than a third of Stowe's 72 square miles is conserved and we have more locally designated scenic roads than the rest of the Vermont combined. We understand the role trees play both **aesthetically and environmentally**.

**\*Tree Wardens authority** should remain with **shade and ornamental trees**. The legislative body should otherwise be in control of the **highways in accordance with Title 19 (Highway Statutes)**.

**\*Towns** need to be able to act in **emergencies** without having to obtain the approval of tree wardens for hazard trees. Time is of the essence in protecting life and property.

**\*Towns** need be able to **maintain brush and power lines within the highway right-of-way** without approval of the tree warden unless there it involves a shade or ornamental tree.

**\*Stowe** has **95 miles** of municipal roads. If you take in consideration both sides of these roads it equals **190 miles of roads and thousands of trees**. The **Town Road Crew and Electric Departments** are out maintaining roads and power lines on a daily basis. In a **storm** we can be cutting down **over 100 trees to restore access and power**.

**Mountain towns** like Stowe are also **disproportionately impacted by the Municipal Road General Permit** due to our **steep slopes**. We are going to need to have to improve ditches to reduce sediment runoff, which may involve out of necessity the taking of trees within the highway right-of-way. The **Conservation Commission and Tree Warden** have also recommended we proactively **remove ash trees** within the

highway right-of-way due to their **potential hazard from the Emerald Ash Borer**. Allowing **property owners the right to preserve non-shade and ornamental ash trees** within the public right-of-way may be time consuming. For some towns they may choose to involve tree wardens more heavily at their discretion, but for others it is **not practical to involve them beyond shade and ornamental trees**. Passage of this bill as is may cause the Town of Stowe to **move beyond our qualified volunteer tree warden** that we often receive sage advice from to necessitating us to **imbed the position within our municipal staff** both from a demand standpoint and to ensure the Town is in a position to protect in a timely manner the public health, safety and welfare.

**Thank you.** Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any further assistance.