

Thank-you - for inviting me to join you this morning and for your understanding of the importance of our forest economy along with our agricultural enterprises and their contributions for all Vermonters

Remember:

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is a nonprofit convener of rural policy.

The Council on Rural Development (2007-2009) was the largest-scale analysis of public values outside of politics in the history of Vermont. It found that the working landscape was a core public priority, supported by 97% of Vermonters. "The bottom line is that agriculture and forest-product development are the foundations of the core essence of Vermont -the beauty of the land, the mix of farm fields and woodlands that surround us -that are essential to our quality of life and recreation. The working forest in Vermont is no accident; it is the result of innumerable economic decisions made by generations of rural families as they make a living from the land. *Their stewardship contributes much to us all and the importance of these families and businesses, providing an economic foundation to our working landscape, needs to be accepted, appreciated, valued and supported or face being lost forever.*"

Testimony. House Ag + Forestry - Feb 22, 2018

Act 250 Comments - October 10, 2018

- Some considerations for improvement to Act 250 for forest based businesses have been included in Act 250 reform language - a step in the right direction.

- Language in legislative reform needs to be clear - to give clear guidance to all involved in the process - avoiding wide ranging interpretations by the decision makers, with a goal of

making sure conditions that are made will enable the business to succeed.

Vermont Forest Products Association Survey - sent to 1000 in industry - 116 surveys returned - 10%.

• Issues impacting the industry and importance to individual/business

- Act 250 - 73%
- Ryegate - 60%
rated very important

- Policies that impact business - 61%
operating expenses

- Other issue - education about the industry for the general public

• Most pressing challenges (82 responses)

- Markets - 41%

- Regulations 17%

- Public perception - 12%
lack of understanding

- Cost of doing business - 5%
in Vermont

- Future workforce - 5%

102 people answered this question

Updates - Ryegate - contract renewal?

Brittan Lbr. - sawmill fire / VT Act 250 / bought sawmill across river in NH.

Katzenbach gravel pit - Received Act 250 permit twice - Appealed - conditions from environmental court limiting hrs. hauling from pit will cause the business to fail - not viable option.