



## Lincoln AgriSource, LLC

Samuel W. Lincoln

4884 East Bethel Rd. • Randolph Center, VT 05061 • (802) 793-1206

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For the record, my name is Sam Lincoln. I own and operate a Master Logger certified mechanized timber harvesting business in Randolph Center. In addition to my career as a farmer and logger in central Vermont, I also served four years as the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation in the Scott administration and I currently serve on the board of directors of the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast.

We appreciate the committee's continued exploration and consideration of H.614. The testimony regarding the reality of what law enforcement and prosecutors are facing as they address crime in Vermont was eye opening and somewhat staggering. However, we are not deterred in our interest to see allegations of timber theft investigated and prosecuted as the evidence and facts are discovered and support a case. As an amendment to the bill, we support a study group being convened, with a report back to the general assembly in 2025.

Specifically, we request that the study group is populated by a group of relevant stakeholders, including the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast. The group would be charged with identifying gaps, deficiencies, and opportunities to the prevent and enforce cases of timber theft and trespass laws, and examine all possible mechanisms and tools, *and* the resources needed to support the necessary changes, without any presumed solutions written into the authorizing language. This is primarily a law enforcement issue, and should be led by a law enforcement agency, and subsequently supported by forestry professionals. Our sector will bring a great collection of insight and experience, but we do not wield the authority necessary to investigate these cases. I have watched the testimony and committee discussions on H.614 and the concepts you've thoughtfully considered continue to rely on some form of enforcement.

As mentioned previously, I am Master Logger certified. Being certified includes a process in which companies are evaluated for performance standards, jobsite inspections are completed by third parties, there are background checks, and the ability for the general public to call the organization anonymously with comments on the work of a Master Logger. It is a logger led mechanism for accountability in our profession. The general assembly has supported scholarships for Master Logger certification of Vermont logging contractors in the past, and it is proposed to do so again in H.624, which you'll hear about when the committee takes that up.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am glad to respond to the committee's questions.