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Agency of Natural Resources
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To: Richard Westman, Chair, Senate Committee of Transportation

From: Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner

Date: 5/14/2026

Re: H.944 – Recommendation Regarding Log Drive Statute Language

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding Sections 50–54 of H.944, which propose transferring statutory responsibilities related to log drives and floating lumber in streams from the Public Utility Commission to the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

After reviewing the proposed language, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation recommends the repeal of these sections of statute rather than the transfer of authority to ANR.

The referenced statutes relate to historic practices involving the driving and floating of lumber in streams. While these provisions remain in statute, they do not reflect contemporary forestry operations or current methods of timber transportation in Vermont. To our knowledge, these authorities are not actively used or administered today.

Because the underlying activity is effectively obsolete, we do not believe there is a current operational or policy need to transfer these authorities to ANR. Doing so could unintentionally create unclear or dormant administrative responsibilities within the Agency without a demonstrated programmatic need, implementation framework, or identified administering entity.

Given the lack of current operational relevance, we believe repeal of the outdated statutory language is the more appropriate approach.

Thank you for your consideration and continued work on H.944.