



CALIFORNIA
LICENSED
FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION

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March 31, 2003

The Honorable Sally Lieber
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Reference: AB 561
CLFA Position: Oppose

Dear Ms. Lieber,

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) has read your AB 561, as amended 3/24, and cannot support this bill.

At a time when California now imports 80% of the wood that we use from other states and foreign countries, we feel that additional regulatory pressures upon the practice of forestry here in the Golden State will only further harm the global environment by continuing the dubious trend of exporting the environmental impacts of our wood consumption habits to distant lands.

Here in California we have 19 million acres of temperate commercial forests – almost 20% of our state's total land area. Yet we are currently harvesting less than 25% of the growth that these forests are incurring, while boosting wood imports from areas which very likely have less stringent standards of environmental protection than we have in place here. Since 1990, timber harvest levels in this state have tumbled 60%, while overall wood consumption has continued to rise.

There is an ethical disconnect at work here that is deeply troubling to California's professional foresters. After all, we are *working environmentalists*.

As to the specifics of AB 561, we believe that changing the crucial intent language of the Forest Practice Act is not a good idea. Although this is largely a matter of semantics, words have meaning. A private landowner whose livelihood is related to forest management should hardly be expected to give *equal* consideration to non-commodity values, important as they are. This proposed language could open the floodgates for legal action and even greater conflict between preservationists and private property rights advocates.

With regard to specific variable retention stocking standards for even age silviculture, we believe that this action is premature at this time. We note that there are some landowners currently utilizing such a concept on a landscape basis, but these efforts are entirely voluntary. Variable retention is a forest management concept that is evolving, and may play a more important role in the future. However, rigidly

prescriptive standards would pose an additional disincentive to forest management and further accelerate the decline of California forestry, as discussed above.

Although we oppose your bill, we are pleased that you are interested in forest management, and invite you, your staff and colleagues to attend a woods tour at a convenient break in your busy schedule. California's professional foresters are always ready and willing to host interested legislators to discuss forestry issues while kicking some dirt out in the woods.

To this end, I will personally stop by your office soon to repeat this invitation. Our experience is that field forestry tours are a great way for both legislators and resource professionals to enjoy a change of pace while developing the mutual understanding so important to the sustainable management of our precious forests and wildlands.

Sincerely Yours,

William W. Keye
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cc: Assembly Natural Resource Committee Staff.

The California Licensed Foresters Association, with approximately 900 members, represents the common interests of Registered Professional Foresters in the State of California. The Association provides opportunities for continuing education and public outreach to its membership, which includes diverse professionals affiliated with public agencies, private timber companies, consultants and the academic community. Governed by an elected Board of Directors, CLFA was established in 1980 after the passage of the landmark California Professional Foresters Law.