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To Whom it May Concern:

Our forests offer wildlife habitat, clean water, forest products, recreational opportunities, and carbon storage. These benefits are realized through managing forest structure, age classes, species makeup, and geographic layout. To meet the demands of today's society and with today's climate, forest management needs to be managed to avoid catastrophic fire, habitat structure needs to be managed to provide breeding grounds for our most vulnerable species, and forest products need to be extracted to provide for a sustainable flow of renewable materials. While our forests are an excellent sink for atmospheric carbon, the story does not end there. Forests also release carbon dioxide. Carbon is stored in lumber. Firewood and wood pellets offset the use of fossil fuels. Recent infestations of spongy moth, emerald ash borer, and hemlock wooly adelgid have caused widespread tree mortality through our state; carbon from those dead trees will be released into the atmosphere.

Our forests need to be managed to provide those benefits previously mentioned. In some cases, early successional habitat needs to be created through extensive cutting to benefit migratory song birds, as outlined by Mass Audubon's Foresters for the Birds Program. In other cases, forests need to be managed for resilience against storms in our ongoing need for clean water within the Quabbin, Ware River, and Wachusett watersheds. In still others, forests need to be managed to allow for the development of old-growth characteristics. There is a carbon result to each management activity that should be directed and not left to the trends of weather disaster, invasive insect outbreak, or the perceived notion that leaving trees alone will solve some problem.

Our global climate is changing as a result of massive carbon dioxide emissions. Our forests are more expansive than they were 100 years ago; they have not solved the problem thus far. Imagining that the forests can store the emissions from the fossil fuels we burn is a mistake. In Massachusetts, we emit roughly the same amount of carbon in 2 days that our forests can store in a year. Our climate future depends on our ability to emit less carbon, use renewable building materials, use less carbon intensive products, burn less fossil fuels, and use alternative, renewable energy sources.

Our habitat biologists, watershed managers, and foresters are excellent stewards of our forested landscape and should be tasked with managing our forested landscape. Forest management decisions should not be in the hands of casual forest enthusiasts given the importance of the potential benefits of forest resources. Forest science has always involved carbon storage, the growth of high quality timber has been the goal of forestry for centuries. Tree growth should be focused on long-lived species, such as oak, maple, hickory, and pine. These trees should eventually be turned into long-lasting forest products when they reach the end of their lives. Short-lived, dying, or insect infested trees should be removed to allow

for development better trees. Those trees removed should be turned into products to store carbon, such as lumber, or firewood to displace fossil fuel burning.

Our forest management decisions should be made by forest scientists; people with education and experience with habitat, forest growth, and watershed management. Forest management should consider carbon effects of different activities, but storage should not be made as a first priority when rare species habitat, clean water, and sustainable forest products are of utmost importance. We need to acknowledge that forests do store carbon, but they are dynamic systems that release carbon and are affected by weather, insects and disease, fire, and general successional trends. We need to realize that our maturing forests will not solve any climate catastrophe caused by our global fossil fuel consumption.

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