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First and Last Name	Date	See Attachment?	General Comments
Joy Pearson	6-Sep	No	<p>I don't see where I can answer the questions asked, nor see where I can make comment.</p> <p>Answers to questions" 1. I think we need to teach environmental values in school starting in the elementary grades.1a.For better tree canopy in municipalities, people should plant trees large enough to provide cover. Let's have tree-lined streets again, not these little non-cover trees that the city plants on too small a place in the sidewalks so they will become deformed or have to be cut down. 1b. Humans can organize to advocate for saving forests, public or private or quasi-public. People should not expect the state to do everything. However, then, the state has to honor the public and not only listen to what they want but to work with them.</p> <p>To combat warmer temperatures, it makes sense to plant trees from warmer climates.</p> <p>There are natural ways to control pests. People and the government need to know them.</p> <p>The government can ever have a part in getting the toxic pest control products off the market.</p>
Glen Ayers	6-Sep	No	<p>Guidelines,</p> <p>I am submitting this Letter to the Editor that I recently sent to the Boston Globe and Commonwealth Magazine. This is for your consideration and to help guide the discussion at the September 12 Public Forum.</p> <p>Support for Ending Logging of Our Public Trust Forests</p> <p>The recently announced Public Trust Forest logging moratorium was a good first step in analyzing and disclosing the critical role that State-owned lands can play in addressing the climate emergency and what their maximum contribution can be to achieving net-zero by 2050, as required by MA Climate Law. However, the Administration's new "Forests as Climate Solutions" website is almost entirely unrelated to the moratorium and the issue of public lands logging to which the public is overwhelmingly opposed. Why is the Administration intentionally mixing and confusing our public lands with the far more extensive privately-owned lands when the policies, guidelines, practices, and ownership control are so vastly different?</p> <p>How could the Administration get this so wrong from the very start? Essentially this "Climate-focused Forestry Initiative" is an attempt to arrive at a predetermined outcome by setting up the process for failure right from the start. The public has already been warned that "no one will be happy" with the outcome, which is the very definition of intentional failure. If this were an honest process, such a prediction would not be necessary or even possible, and if the actual science was really intended to be followed, then making statements like this would be unnecessary to say the least.</p> <p>The fact that no critics of the public lands logging program have been invited to sit on the so-called "Committee of Scientific Experts" is further proof of a false promise and a contrived, predetermined outcome. Outside observers can clearly see that the fix is in, the make-up of the panel is not made up of scientists but instead is heavily dominated by pro-logging vested interests. This is the same thing as announcing a "Panel of Nutrition Experts" to determine a new healthy school lunch menu, and then appointing Coca-Cola, Kraft Foods, Hershey Foods, and Frito-Lays executives to come up with new guidelines. It is obviously predictable what the outcome would be by such a junk-food dominated advisory panel, and the same can be said for the outcome of the forestry panel.</p>
Glen Ayers, cont.	6-Sep	No	<p>Numerous public citizens have been active in opposition to the destructive privatization of our public forests for decades. Michael Kellett from Restore: The North Woods is one of the most astute forest policy wonks living in the Commonwealth. Janet Sinclair from Save Mass Forests has likewise been involved in this opposition effort for a long time. Glen Ayers from the Enviro Show is a soil scientist who has been active in forest protection efforts for almost 40-years and is very involved in DCR logging opposition, filing a lawsuit against the logging of Wendell State Forest and even getting arrested by DCR during protests at the Brook Road logging site. The fact that none of these long-time critics and activists were invited onto the panel of experts shows that the Administration never intended to actually deal with the issues at the heart of the controversy. Instead several forestry apologists and industry communicators were stacked on the panel, along with a few actual respected scientists. The public will not trust the outcome from a panel that is dominated by pro-logging interests, which means that the controversy will only be intensified, due to this intentional violation of the public trust.</p> <p>While Governor Healey promised increased transparency, it is unlikely that this blatant sort of in-your-face manipulation of a public process is what she was referring to. There is still an option to dramatically change this effort by the Administration to control and exclude the opposition (again, the vast majority of the public oppose private logging of publicly-owned forests) through this roll-out of a sham process that is being used to arrive at a predetermined outcome. An entirely different process can be implemented where the climate and biodiversity would be the ultimate winner. And if that comes to pass, then the vast majority of the public will be happy with the outcome, instead of the current projection by the Administration that no-one will be happy. This is a true test of leadership in the face of the Climate Emergency. Will it be business as usual, or will scientific and climate reality determine the outcome? Will the public actually participate in the entire decision-making process, or will the Administration continue to build on the failure and rotten foundation of the previous forest futures visioning process?</p> <p>Glen Ayers, Greenfield, MA</p>

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Kirstin Beatty	10-Sep	Yes	<p>This is a submission to accompany my form submission for the 12 September meeting with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in Massachusetts. Please also include the attached documents as part of my submission. I would like to first make clear that I am not against all 'management' of forests when it is to increase native biodiversity and sustainability, but I am against incentives for tree, plant, and wildlife removal, especially overharvesting of species that cannot quickly reestablish. Instead, incentives need to exist to maintain the balance of forest ecosystems, in particular biodiversity, and with regulations and penalties to prevent overharvesting as is speculated to have sped desertification of the Sahara desert.(1) I would like substantial healthy, untouched public forest set aside for nature's management and for public research on the health of these forest ecosystems. However, I also believe we need research on small areas managed for biodiversity, to see how and if we can manage forests sustainably for forest health, to see if we can benefit not only from carbon storage, clean air, and water, but also from sustainable access to medical, material, and edible benefits. I'd like to emphasize managing small areas that are carefully monitored, because the opportunity for exploitation and removing any products from forests is a recipe for disaster in our capitalistic-incentivized system, as is identifying medical and edible benefits of threatened species. I am suggesting supporting research, but with the caveat that until sustainability can be insured, any products of such research should not leave the forest and publications of findings should be limited and censored to prevent abuse by individuals or groups, while findings helpful for forest protection widely publicized. Research which suggests indigenous communities in the Amazon rainforest managed and lived within the forest beneficially, and 'modern tree communities in Amazonia are structured to an important extent by a long history of plant domestication by Amazonian peoples.' (2) The question for me is whether we can do the same, and whether it would be beneficial to do so on public or private land, or whether letting nature take charge entirely is better for forest ecosystems, as well as better for clean air, water, and carbon storage. It is entirely possible that leaving healthy, intact forest systems alone is best. Nature is incredible. A 100-year-plus protected area in Madagascar, isolated geographically, has 3,400 acres of lush forest teeming with wildlife but is paradoxically set in dry grasslands and a country struggling with food shortages and drought.(3) But I think we need a little research to find a new relationship to nature, and to find new ways of existing on private land, if not upon public land, aside from including supporting more livelihoods which protect forest ecosystems. Forests in the Commonwealth are not all isolated geographically on islands like Madagascar, and deforestation is happening quickly here as in the USA. We need to do more to support the existence of forests and of biodiversity, especially natives. Supporting biodiversity and increased acreage is important to maintaining forest ecosystem health, including to support wildlife communities and healthy trees that are resilient enough to manage external threats. I assume that a concern will be that forests left alone or managed without logging will be plagued with fire and invasive insects and wish to address this issue and while advocating for managing forests not for logging, but for native biodiversity. Regarding fire, logging does not prevent fires because it does not address underbrush and debris. Of special relevance, a healthy forest ecosystem has been shown to manage fire better than heavily managed public forest and timber cuts.(4) Fires are also a natural occurrence that can support plant biodiversity and sustainability in a healthy ecosystem. About invasive insects, a recent study, where the invasive spotted lanternfly was fenced in four years with young trees, found it is not as devastating as previously thought and all trees survived.(5) Similarly, woodpeckers have been found to be effective controls for the invasive emerald ash borer.(6) In other words, conventional, knee-jerk practices to manage these and other invasives with pesticides or logging appear to be based on convention rather than scientific observation. With or without research, we clearly need to protect our existing forests as threatened ecosystems as existing research indicates forests are increasingly plagued with disease, trouble reproducing, and other external threats. I should not conclude without reiterating the need to limit wireless and electrical radiation for healthy ecosystems. We currently have massive new infrastructure and ongoing new development of wind turbines, solar farms, wireless facilities as well as preexisting electrical systems. The new electrical infrastructure emits magnetic fields far beyond what is conventionally considered safe all along the infrastructure carrying the electricity. Conventionally, fields of 2 milligauss have been considered harmful for chronic exposure, but fields of 20 to 1000 milligauss and higher emitted near wildlife and people are now being presented as 'safe' by 'consultants' such as in the 'Electric and Magnetic Field (EMF) Assessment for the Proposed Mayflower Wind Project' for Southcoast Wind.(7) These fields are commonly known to interfere with the sensitive sensing mechanisms of wildlife for migration, but also can interfere with circadian rhythms, soil microbial communities, hunting, and the the health of plants and wildlife. Regarding harm to wildlife and even plants from wireless infrastructure, I will not at this time go into details on the research, such as available on the EMF-Portal managed by staff at the highly-respected technical Aachen University. However, a helpful review of effects on wildlife from so-called 'non-ionizing' radiation is freely available online and attached -- non-ionizing radiation includes from radiation from electricity and radiation from wireless infrastructure.(8)</p>
Kirstin Beatty, cont.	10-Sep	Yes	<p>In addition, there is also some research indicating that wireless is harmful to the atmosphere, such as increasing lightning discharges to ground, altering the ratio of negative to positive ions, and increasing the volatility of and chemical interactions of the atmosphere -- unfortunately, I don't have the time to search out these specific studies at this moment though hope to have this information available online in the future via lasttreelaws.com. I will, however, attach one 2004 environmental assessment which on page 18 discusses the limitations of assessing environmental effects of radiofrequencies (aka non-ionizing radiation) and admits the difficulty of making heating calculations by stating (emphasis added): 'microwave heating from which all the other effects discussed above follow could be considerably higher than expected, resulting in correspondingly higher levels of self absorption and environmental impact.'" (9) In addition, changes in ion ratios can be harmful not only to the atmosphere, but immediately to health such as in one study finding an increase in mice influenza mortality rates with depleted negative ions.(10) Negative ions are conventionally considered healthy, but these are being reported by scientists in the field as depleted by interaction with modern radiation emitters. Even though such public atmospheric research is limited in breadth, given that we propose to save forests to save the planet and the planet's climate, it seems reasonable that any plan proposed should also significantly curtail allowable electromagnetic emissions within and near our public forests.</p> <p>(1) David K. Wright. (2017) Humans as Agents in the Termination of the African Humid Period. <i>Front. Earth Sci. Sec. Quaternary Science, Geomorphology and Paleoenvironment</i>. Volume 5 - 2017 https://doi.org/10.3389/feart.2017.00004</p> <p>(2) Levis, C., Costa, F. R., Bongers, F., et. al. (2017). Persistent effects of pre-Columbian plant domestication on Amazonian forest composition. <i>Science (New York, N.Y.)</i>, 355(6328), 925–931. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aal0157</p> <p>(3) Machan, D. (2022, July/August) Into the Forbidden Forest: Famed American biologist Patricia Wright explores an astonishing breadth of biodiversity in the wilderness of Madagascar. <i>Smithsonian Magazine</i>. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/into-forbidden-forest-madagascar-180980318/</p> <p>(4) Zald, H. S. J., & Dunn, C. J. (2018). Severe fire weather and intensive forest management increase fire severity in a multi-ownership landscape. <i>Ecological applications</i> : a publication of the Ecological Society of America, 28(4), 1068–1080. https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.1710</p> <p>(5) Kelli Hoover et al, Effects of long-term feeding by spotted lanternfly (Hemiptera: Fulgoridae) on ecophysiology of common hardwood host trees, <i>Environmental Entomology</i> (2023). DOI: 10.1093/ee/nvad084</p> <p>(6) Flower, Charles & Long, Lawrence & Knight, Kathleen & Rebbeck, Joanne & Brown, Joel & González-Meler, Miquel & Whelan, Christopher. (2014). Native bark-foraging birds preferentially forage in infected ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.) and prove effective predators of the invasive emerald ash borer (<i>Agrilus planipennis</i> Fairmaire). <i>Forest Ecology and Management</i>. 313. 300-306. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2013.11.030</p> <p>(7) Christopher M. Long, Gradient Corporation (2021 October) Electric and Magnetic Field (EMF) Assessment for the Proposed Mayflower Wind Project. SouthCoast Wind (formerly Mayflower Wind). Construction and Operations Plan. https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/appendix-p1emf-assessment-report</p> <p>(8) Levitt, B. B., Lai, H. C., & Manville, A. M. (2021). Effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields on flora and fauna, part 1. Rising ambient EMF levels in the environment. <i>Reviews on environmental health</i>, 37(1), 81–122. https://doi.org/10.1515/reveh-2021-002</p> <p>(9) T. R. Robinson, T. K. Yeoman and R. S. Dhillon (2004) Environmental impact of high power density microwave beams on different atmospheric layers. Radio and Space Plasma Physics Group, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK. ESA Contract number: 18156/04/NL/MV</p> <p>(10) Krueger, A.P., Reed, E.J. Effect of the air ion environment on influenza in the mouse. <i>Int J Biometeorol</i> 16, 209–232 (1972). DOI: 10.1515/reveh-2021-0026</p> <p>Kirstin Beatty Director, Last Tree Laws (.com)</p>

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Maureen Black	11-Sep	No	<p>I would like to make a brief comment regarding your meeting about forest management guidelines and climate science.</p> <p>I have begun to attend the Western Mass Solar Forum presentations each Tuesday in September. In the first session the phrases "protecting natural and working lands for sequestration" and "environmental justice" were spoken by many of the presenters.</p> <p>However, in nearby Shutesbury, a conflict is going on between some townspeople (Smart Solar Shutesbury) and a private landowner who seeks to install several very large scale ground mounted solar projects, all of which will require deforestation which may affect the town's water supply, not to mention the damage to the environment and wildlife there. It is unclear where the town's Selectboard stands on this important issue. It is my understanding that the private landowner and/or developer is suing the town for attempting to change their by-laws to ensure more protections. Small towns cannot afford this kind of nonsense.</p> <p>Recently, some of the small surrounding towns are having conversations about how to protect our forests regionally. My Planning Board refused to rewrite its solar by-law because their consultant advised that whoever approves these plans is more likely to favor solar development than protecting sensitive areas because of recent case law. I urge you to move toward protection of public lands and issuing a decisive report about sequestration in our forests.</p> <p>I do believe that solar energy development is important, but clearing forests, using agricultural lands and threatening wetlands should be avoided at all costs.</p> <p>I hope that the information you gather will help the small towns in the western part of the state prevent unjust and unsafe solar developments on both public and private lands.</p> <p>Maureen Black</p>
Louise Bergeron	11-Sep	No	<p>Bellow is a comment that we would like to provide concerning the Healey-Driscoll Climate-Smart Forest Management Practices.</p> <p>We applaud this initiative to invest in forest conservation, which aims to conserve wildlife habitat and harness the power of our forest to combat climate change. Attention must be paid to the threat posed by invasive plant species to the health of our forests. Invasives are now present in many areas, and their growth and spread are exacerbated by the disturbance of the canopy, such as during logging operations. We have found many patches in the forests in the Quabbin area where trees were removed a few years ago and are now dominated by invasive bittersweet and honeysuckle. Those involved in forestry and tree extraction need to be held accountable for managing invasive plant species after harvest, and independent monitoring needs to be implemented to ensure the control of invasive plants and the growth of native ecologically valuable species. Without such measures, the value of the forest for ecological and economic purposes will be quickly lost.</p> <p>Sincerely, Louise Bergeron and Craig Furman Land Owners, West Road Petersham Massachusetts</p>
Kate O'Connor and Frederick Spence	12-Sep	No	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What role should humans play in optimizing carbon storage and sequestration in forests? To advance other objectives such as clean water, habitat for rare species, or wood products? Humans should leave large areas of forests alone, with permanent protection, for the forests to manage themselves as they have done for millions of years to provide the climate creating and regulating service of breathing in carbon dioxide, and storing the carbon in their soil organisms, roots, trunks and branches. Without human management, forests allowed to grow old provide the easiest and best solution for long term removal and storage of carbon, thereby helping to heal the climate crisis for free. Forests provide habitats for 80% of the earth's wild land species. Forests provide cooling shade, and reduced air temperatures. Intact unmanaged forests create the healthiest soils, which slow down and absorb rainwater, prevent flooding, erosion, and help fill our underground reservoirs. 2. What is your definition or concept of forest reserves? What, if any, is the role of human intervention in maintaining reserve conditions? Forest reserves should be permanently protected and left unmanaged by humans as much as possible. Human chainsaw management causes worse forest fires, and harms the soil organism networks that trees depend on for their health. Logging and thinning allows more invasive species, bugs, diseases, and weather events to invade and harm the forests. Most of Massachusetts was covered with forests before European immigrants cut them down. Originally forest openings were naturally created by beavers, and weather events including fires. These provided habitats for the species that need open land and transitional forest growth areas. There is plenty of logging done already on private lands here in Massachusetts required by Chapter 61, that can provide for the species that belonged here historically and need these non-forested and young forest habitats. All of our public forest lands should be converted to permanently protected, non-managed forests reserves, and allowed to grow old to help heal the climate crisis, which is far more important than managing our small amount of public forests with thinning and logging for non-endangered and game species. 3. According to the Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment (2022) degraded forest health is expected due to warming temperatures, changing precipitation, increasing pest occurrence, and more frequent and intense storms. What types of forest vulnerability do you think require effort to preserve, protect, fortify and/or enhance our state forest lands? What management practices or approaches do you suggest to make the forests of Massachusetts more resilient to the conditions projected by the Climate Change Assessment? Unmanaged older forests are the most resilient; the most fire, disease, and pest resistant, and are best able to adapt to climate challenges. We urge support for the current bills in the legislature that will create permanent unmanaged forest reserves on Massachusetts public forest lands. We believe forests should be allowed to regrow on all public lands that have been forested. We need to also provide meaningful financial incentives for some private land owners to permanently protect many more unmanaged forests so that we can achieve the recommended 30% of land in permanent protection. Logging companies are already among the largest land owners in the state and they can provide much of the wood necessary for providing durable wood products. Trees give us our breathable air and a decent climate for free when we let them be. <p>Kate O'Connor and Frederick Spence Westhampton, MA</p>

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Mark LeLacheur	13-Sep	No	<p>I believe it would be advantageous in our fight against climate change to add an additional classification to the Chapter 61 guidelines, specifically designed to increase and support on-going climate oriented forest carbon sequestration by encouraging Old Growth. So for example, in addition to Chapter 61 plans designed for Forest Management, Recreation, and Agriculture land owners could choose to designate their land as a "Reserve" for the purpose of keeping forest lands intact to increase their contribution to carbon sequestration. The tax deferral for such designation could incentivize landowners to hold onto their forests rather than be driven to develop it by financial hardship. I believe that this additional Chapter 61 designation would relieve some of the "anti" pressure on timber harvesting and add to the ongoing movement to support intact forests.</p> <p>Thank You for listening, Mark LeLacheur Shutesbury</p>
Pru Smith	13-Sep	No	<p>I attended the climate oriented forest solutions forum last night and listened to many important comments. I have an additional idea which I didn't hear mentioned during the program and which I believe has great value. I believe it would be adventitious to add an additional classification to the Chapt. 61 guidelines, specifically designed to increase and support on-going climate oriented forest carbon sequestration. So for example, in addition to Chapt. 61 plans designed for Forest Management, Recreation, and Agriculture, land owners could choose to designate their land as a "Reserve" for the purpose of keeping forest lands intact to increase their contribution to carbon sequestration. The tax deferral for such designation could incentivize landowners to hold onto their forests rather than be driven to develop it by financial hardship. I believe that this additional Chapt. 61 designation would relieve some of the "anti" pressure on timber harvesting and add to the ongoing movement to support intact forests.</p> <p>I look forward to ongoing work by the State to help reduce the effects of the Climate Crisis.</p> <p>Sincerely, Prudence Smith, MS Forestry, UMass Amherst, 1986</p>
James Caffrey	14-Sep	No	<p>Sept 14, 2023</p> <p>Written comments - Climate-oriented Forest Guidelines – Public Input</p> <p>Indigenous communities lived closely with the forested landscape. However, with European settlement people increasingly looked on the forests simply for products to use in their economy. Or, as land to clear for farms, houses, or factories. While as we face increasing threats from climate change we cannot go back to pre-settlement times, rather we must learn to live within and utilize our forests in an integrated and sustainable manner.</p> <p>As such it is hypocritical to lock-up all the commonwealth's forest land to retain carbon while importing much of our wood fiber from forests that are inherently less resilient than our own forests. Massachusetts forests should continue to provide reserves, support endangered flora and fauna, provide clean water, and supply forest products either for export or to be used locally.</p> <p>We need to understand that forests and forest products are an important part of a sustainable rural economy. The commonwealth can develop programs that can begin to reconnect our urban population with our forests. One way is to provide more support for our town forests. Carbon retention is important and better record keeping and an annual carbon report to the citizens will help, too. The oft repeated idea that harvesting forests contributes to carbon in the atmospheres is not entirely correct. If an acre of forest is harvested then indeed that carbon is lost for maybe 30 years until growing trees replace it. But, in reality, we must consider the entire commonwealth as one forest. With that understanding if an acre is harvested in one spot there are a number of uncut acres that are immediately storing the carbon lost in that harvested acre. The US Forest Service has all this data on a statewide level. If the annual growth of Massachusetts forests exceeds the annual harvest (and it does) we are both storing carbon and using our forests for wood products to support our local economy. The threat is not harvesting but forest loss to development. The commonwealth can also help to develop markets for products (like mass timber) that will store carbon in buildings for long periods of time.</p> <p>So, yes reserves; yes working forests; yes support for the rural economy, and yes to better education of our citizens as to the importance of our forests for all its benefits.</p>
James Dowd	14-Sep	No	<p>I strongly support management efforts to enhance and create additional early succession forest habitat in Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wildlife Management Areas and other publicly owned properties.</p> <p>Thank you for your kind attention.</p>
Kavita Katighattam	15-Sep	No	<p>Dear Under Secretary Cooper,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to talk at the virtual meeting a few days ago. I would like to submit a written comment as well. I have a Ph.D. in Plant Molecular Biology and have received training in the fields of Botany, Zoology, and Biochemistry, and I appreciate and care about the natural world around me. I am also a mother to two teenage children who love observing birds and wildlife and deeply care about them. Through our own observations and through scientific literature, my children and I have begun to understand that there are many complicated processes including the interconnectedness between non-human species that govern and sustain ecosystems and habitats. The organisms in a forest have co-evolved with each other and with the geology and climate of the area, long before we humans came into existence. There are so many species yet to be discovered and so much to be learned from tree canopy to the subsoil mycorrhizal fungi.</p> <p>The NEMT Forest is a perfect example of such processes at work. An expert, Walter Kittredge, now retired from Harvard University, surveyed the flora in the NEMT forest and determined the Floristic Index Quality to be over 47, which puts the NEMT Forest as an 'exceptional' Forest. His work is independently attested by the fact that BioMAP3 classified the NEMT Forest as Forest Core habitat, a designation given to a very small percentage of forests in Massachusetts. Yet, the NEMT School and MSBA gave the green signal to clearcut over 14 acres of dense canopy of mature trees at the heart of the forest and they will soon blast irreversibly destroy the geology, endangered habitat, wetlands, endangered species and incredible biodiversity – frogs, salamanders, luna moth, lady slippers and other flora and fauna and alter wetlands, if allowed to proceed. All this despite the presence of existing land with least environmental impact available for NEMT School to site their school. We need a systemic change. Please follow the logic and the science. The citizens raising these concerns care about the forests and the environment for wildlife and future generations and not about money like the logging, construction, and solar farm industry where the bias is very obvious.</p>

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Kavita Katighattam, cont.	15-Sep	No	<p>Please take a moment to read a small booklet I put together a curated collection of the incredible diversity of plants, animals, and microorganisms documented and photographed by my children, scientists, and citizen scientists at the NEMT Forest from Jan 2022 through May 2023, and the knowledge we have gained through our own research of scientific literature on the importance of forests and wetlands, and with advice from experts in the field, have been presented in this booklet - The NEMT Forest Ecosystem. We also created an educational video with footage from the NEMT Forest. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISSII51rfk0 Please take the time to watch this. It is only about 5 minutes. All that we had recorded and documented has been destroyed and killed by the failure of justice and lack of ethics and principle. I would also like to share people's voices - Our March for the Forest video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYb1e6rA2pk. A video from October last year (all gone this year): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHLRg6_WW4U. Destruction videos: https://youtu.be/g4_p_NVAj0 50 trees in 15 minutes. On September 1st, another citizen got this drone footage:https://youtu.be/pD6zmjgGeHo</p> <p>We need to make an ethical choice to protect forests for non-human species and for future generations. We are at this stage in climate crises because the Forestry management and environmental protection agencies are not doing the right thing. They lack the fundamental understanding that a Forest should be viewed harmoniously as a whole ecosystem from tree canopy to subterranean network of roots and microbes. We cannot just replace a Forest with a Tree Farm and expect it to provide the same benefits. I urge you to do the right thing and save our forests. We have destroyed enough. There needs to be a systemic change. I look forward to your response.</p> <p>Thank you, Kavita Karighattam, Ph.D.</p>
Glen Ayers	15-Sep	Yes	<p>Hi Guidelines Folks,</p> <p>I am submitting these comments after the recent public forum on Climate Oriented Forest Management Guidelines that was held on 9/12/23. I was the second member of the public to offer comments that night.</p> <p>The comments that I offered that night may have seemed harsh to you, but they were truthful and factual. My overall comment was that this "Guidelines" process is a distraction and a sham, because what is really needed is a complete overhaul of the public lands logging program that DCR runs as a corrupt racket. Their planning, approval, and implementation process is corrupt from beginning to end. This problem is not going to be fixed by simply revising some guidelines, even if your intentions are sincere and honorable.</p> <p>Simply put, guidelines are comparable to the final decorations on a cake. They are not even the frosting, but more like the way the cake is cut and displayed. Guidelines do not address the ingredients of the cake, how it is mixed, cooked, and finished. Guidelines can not change the underlying nature of the thing that they apply to.</p> <p>In this case, the entire public lands logging program is the finished cake, and simply talking about how the final product gets cut and displayed does not address the fact that the cake was made following a recipe that is based on deceit, violations, exclusions, misrepresentation, intentional disregard, and self-serving motivations. The ingredients are rotten, the cooks are corrupt, and the outcome of the process is putrid and foul. Revising guidelines to deal with this situation is actually insulting to many of us who know what is going on. That is why I said that this public forum process was a sham.</p>
Glen Ayers, cont.	15-Sep	Yes	<p>Public lands logging is 100% policy-driven. There is no law that requires DCR to chop down our mature forests, especially during a time of climate emergency. The policy may have been in place for many years, but reality mandates that we change business as usual. Our new Climate Chief Hoffer has said that repeatedly. She was notably absent from the public forum a few days ago. I assume that is because her point of view, which I share, does not fit in with the preconceived outcome of this pathetic guidelines effort.</p> <p>I worked to have the opposition to logging on state-owned lands and the logging moratorium placed into the Democratic State Platform. I was Thrilled when Candidate Healey incorporated the public lands logging moratorium and scientific review into her campaign climate platform. I was likewise optimistic when I heard that Governor Healey had finally announced the logging moratorium. However, I have been extremely disappointed by the way this effort has been rolled out and I continue to be highly suspicious of the current effort to avoid dealing with the elephant in the room. Instead, the weakest attempt is being made to address the critical role that public forests have to play in addressing the climate emergency by updating forestry "Guidelines". I mostly interpret this as an effort to placate the opposition by proposing voluntary guidelines, when what is needed is a complete and comprehensive effort at updating the entire policy related to how our publicly-owned forests are being managed. Guidelines will not be sufficient, in light of the climate reality.</p> <p>I have attached a slide deck which I would like to be able to present to your team, at your earliest convenience. I would like to explain to you how corrupt this DCR logging process is. How it intentionally violates the public trust, using loopholes, absurd logic, and self-serving and ridiculous interpretations of laws and regulations. As I have said, the entire process is corrupt. I want the opportunity to present this information to you and your staff so that you know, if you really don't already know, that when a program is so obviously corrupt and contemptible, that merely suggesting some guidelines will not address the substantive defects that are present.</p> <p>Unfortunately, I expect that you will not take me up on my offer, and will instead continue on your effort to appease the opposition. I can state emphatically that we will not be fooled. We will not be placated by your efforts. The outcome of this initiative, and the lifting of the moratorium in a few months will have accomplished essentially nothing, and the same controversy will continue, only it will be worse after most of the people involved realize that they were taken for a ride.</p> <p>Many of us strongly supported Maura Healey. So far, this process reflects very poorly on her and believe me I am not the only one who thinks this. There is still time to avoid enormous embarrassment for the Healey Team, but that will require a rapid and abrupt course correction. Failing that, your efforts will be seen as a colossal disaster, even worse than the failed Forest Futures Visioning Process. It will be worse because we went through the FFVP and saw firsthand what an absolute failure it was. We now know better than to trust such manipulated processes where the final product in no way represents the input or the process that led to the outcome. I sincerely hope that you realize how this current effort will be seen as a much greater disaster.</p> <p>Sincerely, Glen Ayers, Greenfield, MA</p>

First and Last Name	Date	See Attachment?	General Comments
Aranya Karighattam	18-Sep	No	<p>Dear Undersecretary Cooper and EEA Officials,</p> <p>I had the opportunity to speak at the public input session for Forests as Climate Solutions on September 12th, 2023.</p> <p>My brother, Arav, and I are teenagers who enjoy taking walks in nature and love observing wildlife. We learned from these observations that birds, insects, and other animals and plants are crucial components that have interconnected relationships with their environment to keep the ecosystem functioning. If any component is removed, the whole ecosystem will collapse.</p> <p>We are very saddened by the rapid rate of forest destruction happening all across Massachusetts for logging, solar farms, and MSBA funded school-expansion projects like the one that destroyed the NEMT Forest, a Forest Core habitat in Wakefield. These are adding to the rapid declines in habitats and biodiversity.</p> <p>The NEMT Forest is a unique forest with vernal pools and rock outcrops home to an incredible diversity of flora and fauna (see collage below). American Toads, Spring Peepers, Wood Frogs, and Spotted Salamanders migrate from the upland regions of this forest down to the vernal pools in spring where they will have their offspring. The Threatened Hentz's Red-bellied Tiger Beetle, endemic to Massachusetts, has been documented on the rock outcrops at the Forest and their larvae live in the rock outcrop crevices. The MESA state-listed Eastern Whip-poor-will has been documented in the Forest.</p> <p>Now, the NEMT Forest has been clear-cut and the beautiful biodiversity has been decimated. We are upset and very concerned that when we grow up, we will be facing a climate and biodiversity crisis far worse than it is right now. I want to be able to walk in nature and listen to the chirps of crickets, the trills of toads, the flute-like songs of the Wood thrush, and the hoots of owls. I want to be able to see rock outcrops, the homes of tiger beetles. Where will they nest? Where will they raise their young? Where will they seek shelter during rain?</p> <p>Each one of us needs to protect every single habitat, every single forest, no matter how big or small, to help Biodiversity thrive.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Aranya Karighattam appreciatebiodiversity.org</p>
Robert Perschel	19-Sep	No	<p>Dear Climate-Oriented Forest Management Committee:</p> <p>Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide comments as you begin your work. The New England Forestry Foundation, which works across the region to permanently conserve forest lands and promote exemplary management, applauds the Healey administration for focusing on natural climate solutions and considering the potential of forests and the forestry sector to help meet our collective goals. This is a crucial endeavor in a time of increasing climate change; it is important that we prepare our forests for the challenges ahead and determine how to best manage them.</p> <p>Forest management includes both decisions on active intervention and decisions on when to leave a forest alone to develop naturally. There are benefits to each action and the charge of this committee is to determine how to make those decisions in the best interests of the people of Massachusetts and the global community. The natural world should have a voice as well and we hope your committee will also consider the non-human entities of this world.</p> <p>However, after listening to comments at the public session we feel it is important to state that: nature has no morality. To nature, a bobcat is no more valuable than a squirrel. A flower no more beautiful than a spider. A maple tree no more important than an ash. An old tree no less or more significant than a young one, or an old-growth forest no more sacred than an early successional one. It is human beings that impart value or morality. What we have now is a cultural landscape determined by specific cultural values. Our current landscape is no less, or more, a cultural landscape than that created in pre-colonial times by Indigenous peoples over thousands of years. The choices we make are different and driven by cultural values which in turn determine the ecological health of the system. It is therefore the job of this committee to determine how forests can be best managed to protect and restore ecological health in accordance with the values and needs of the people of Massachusetts in a time of climate change. Cultural values and needs change and it is a good time to consider our values and needs in context of the threat of a changing climate.</p> <p>In order to address this question of how to manage our state's public forests we have to ask the right question to begin with. We believe the best question to start the discussion with is:</p> <p>How can we build resilience and help forests adapt to climate change so that we can optimize the capacity of forests to mitigate climate change and deliver the goods and services valued by the people of Massachusetts?</p> <p>The question you offered at the public session, "How can humans optimize carbon storage and resilience in forests?" is a good one, but it is a subset of the umbrella question phrased above. If we asked this same question about agricultural lands the answer would ultimately be that we should stop farming and let the acres revert to forest. Farmers modify original ecosystems to provide food for our society and foresters modify forests to provide biobased renewable forest products. If we want to think about forests and climate change, we have to think about how we harvest trees - or don't harvest them - within the context of a larger system that encompasses what happens in the forest as well as how our forests interact with human lives and human economies, and how these interactions impact climate change.</p> <p>People in Massachusetts use a lot of wood products that must be produced in some forest, somewhere. Stopping harvest in MA will just move the harvest somewhere else where the people of MA have no jurisdiction, and this will not necessarily optimize climate mitigation. It is called leakage. Moving away from wood products to more fossil fuel-based alternative products like concrete, steel and plastic will also exacerbate climate change. These negative impacts on climate are not revealed unless a systematic approach to the situation is considered. To make this systematic approach more difficult we need to consider not just the direct impacts on climate but how our decisions impact biodiversity and wildlife habitat.</p>

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Robert Perschel, cont.1	19-Sep	No	<p>Another alternative offered is to just consume less. There will be 1.5 billion more people on the planet in the next 30 years with more people moving to urban areas. They aren't going away and if we continue to build with steel and concrete we can never solve the climate problem. The entire infrastructure of New York City is replicated every 30 days on a global scale, and this will continue for the next 40 years. Currently wood is the only biologically based, renewable material that can be used for building at scale. This analogy can be repeated for many products, and many made from plastic. We should try to consume less, but clearly, we cannot solve the climate problem without transitioning to a bioeconomy with wood as one, if not the major, renewable supply.</p> <p>Forest management and the continued production of wood products is thus a linchpin in the transition to a new bioeconomy and critical to meeting the climate challenge. At the same time, forest management and renewable forest products cannot solve the climate problem alone, and any intervention into a forest ecosystem has consequences for forest health and biodiversity. The forest doesn't need our intervention. If there were no human beings and human needs, there would be no reason to practice forest management. But there are intensifying human needs, and this is a time of climate change, so the charge of this committee and the umbrella question stated above are very relevant to our future.</p> <p>NEFF's perspective on forests and climate change utilizes a systems approach which integrates both an appropriate scaled reserve system, where little or no human intervention takes place, embedded in a system of well managed lands. The size and location of the reserve system should be evaluated within a systems approach which takes into consideration the necessary supply of biobased materials, the impact on climate change over short and long periods of a hands-off approach including stochastic events and the effect on biodiversity and wildlife conditions on local and landscape levels. The accelerating impacts of climate change make it necessary to re-evaluate and make appropriate changes to that reserve system as well as re-evaluating and making changes to the approaches to active forest management.</p> <p>NEFF acknowledges the need to create an appropriate reserve system embedded within a matrix of forest managed for climate, biodiversity and biobased products. Since most of Massachusetts and New England forests are privately owned, our public lands should play a leading role in creating that appropriately sized reserve system which needs to be larger and more representative of all habitats than it currently is. Decisions to add public lands to a state and regional reserve system should not be dictated by solely acreage goals; they should be considered in an ecological systems context at scales, types and locations determined necessary to optimize wildlife and biodiversity, and climate mitigation across the landscape. A combination of managed and reserved lands will be necessary to optimize multiple objectives.</p>
Robert Perschel, cont.2	19-Sep	No	<p>The remainder of our comments will focus directly on that portion of the forest where active management will take place.</p> <p>There are at least three reasons why it is important for Massachusetts to continue to practice active forestry and harvesting on its public lands:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue to follow the original purpose of why these lands were placed in public trust. 2. To provide for a significant percentage of the wood fiber consumption of Massachusetts citizens and thus participate as fully as possible in a new bioeconomy. 3. To demonstrate to private landowners what excellent forestry looks like on public lands and encourage them to manage their lands better. Engagement with the natural world and the production of our material needs is an important aspect of being a wise and involved citizen of the Commonwealth. When individuals forget where our milk or wood comes from, they are less capable of providing good guidance on future paths and more reliant on "experts." Although there are many forest landowners in Massachusetts, most of our citizenry do not own and operate farms or forests. Thus, our jointly owned public lands are the one remaining way for people to engage in living with, nurturing, managing and respecting natural ecosystems and they should continue to have an investment in those decisions on how to manage, harvest or set land aside free from intervention. <p>Our Massachusetts forests are aging, even aged, and will be increasingly susceptible to stochastic events and generally warmer climate realities. Management can help by making our forests more resilient and adaptable to these impacts. Changing stand structures to allow both more older forests and younger forests [depending on the specific site and landscape context] will help. Favoring or regenerating native tree species better adapted to warmer climates is also a practice we can begin now. Major rain events are already upon us; renewed examination of forest cover, roads, trails and parking lots, and major erosion liabilities are called for. Planning for salvage following major hurricanes, pest infestations or ice storms should occur now so that dead, down or dying material can be utilized and to prevent fuel build-up for wildfires.</p> <p>With the help of forest experts, NEFF has codified the standards we have utilized on our own properties for almost 80 years. The Exemplary Forestry Standards are available for consideration as the type of management practices that could help. Our experience and modeling of future pathways indicate that these practices allow for the increase of carbon in forest, while continuing the production of forest products; they are intended to build resilience, more complex structure and composition. They are designed to mitigate climate change, improve wildlife habitat and increase the productivity of biobased forest products. These practices would have to be adjusted to meet specific time frame demands- some practices can yield results in 30 years, while others may yield larger results but accomplish it over 70 years or more.</p> <p>Through our representative on this committee, we NEFF's team of forestry and conservation professionals is available to introduce our Exemplary Forestry Standards for the Acadian, and Central & Transition Hardwoods, forest types to see if they might be useful as a developed set of practices ,or as foundation for a tailored set of standards, for Massachusetts forest lands.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Robert T. Perschel Executive Director New England Forestry Foundation</p>