

My name is Chris Pirner, my business is Pirner Logging & Land Clearing, Inc. I am a logger and I make my living working in the woods. I see the hard work and dedication of those, who like myself, work in this industry.

Although land clearing is in the name, it is not primarily what we do or who we are.

The proposed change to regulations to disqualify woody bio-mass from land conversion operations is, in my opinion, a mistake.

My mother told me the road to hell is paved with good intentions. I believe this is one of those times.

Land owners are not going to convert land to another use because of the financial gain from bio-mass. There isn't any, they would realize little to none. Bio-mass is a byproduct of land clearing. There is no reason to disqualify bio-mass from land conversion. In the end, there is no difference between bio-mass from land clearing and bio-mass from selective harvests. Disqualifying this type of bio-mass will only lead to more expense for all parties involved. For example, by having to truck all the bio-mass products to other states for them to take advantage of its use. This bio-mass product should be used in this state for conversion to power and/or heat in place of fossil fuels. Thus keeping jobs and money in this state's economy.

Land clearing and woody bio-mass from land conversion is merely a step in a process. When land is being converted to another use, such as housing, solar or industrial, we are called in to do a job. As such, the bio-mass product should be put to the best possible use. Land clearing is not something we promote, it is merely a part of what we do. It is a part of progress.

Moving on to another point; keeping woody bio-mass to the 50% efficiency requirement is just plain wrong. We need to promote sustainable forestry. The way to do this is to provide markets for low grade wood and bio-mass. If this doesn't happen, forestry will go back to the days of high-grading (taking out the best and leaving the rest). This does not promote good, sustainable forestry. Bio-mass helps to allow for the restoration of forests and habitats by creating diversity and, in some cases, a fresh start. Bio-mass creates a market for trees that would otherwise never be cut. Lack of markets will lead to the dominance of low quality wood and diseased trees left in our forests.

The forest is currently growing at a rate of 5 times what is being harvested. While this sounds good, tree mortality exceeds harvesting at a rate of 2:1. This means twice as many trees are dying than are being harvested, due to disease, insects, overcrowding and a lack of good forest management.

If you think of the forest as a garden, it makes sense. When you plant a garden, at some point you need to remove the weeds. If you don't and you just harvest the vegetables, you will be left with nothing but weeds.

The forest works in the same way, just over a longer period of time. If you don't remove the low grade, diseased wood products and just remove the best, eventually low grade is all you will have left. This is the wrong way to go about practicing good forest management.

This is the most important reason to promote the markets for bio-mass and to promote a healthy, sustainable forest economy. I implore you, as a father and a grandfather, to revisit these two parts of these regulations and do the right thing for the generations to follow and for our forests.