

Save Massachusetts Forests

PETITION CALLING FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION OF MASSACHUSETTS STATE-OWNED LANDS

Background Information

This citizen petition is a formal comment to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines 10-Year Review. The 2012 guidelines, which designated some land as open for logging and other active management practices, did not adequately account for the global climate and biodiversity crises. DCR can help address these concerns now by making existing “Reserves” permanent and designating undeveloped “Woodlands” and Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) lands as Carbon and Biodiversity Reserves. This would protect intact ecosystems influenced primarily by natural processes — a level of protection that now exists for only 1% of the state’s land base.

What this DCR action would do:

- **Fight climate change** by allowing forests to grow back and keeping them standing so they can maximize carbon removal from the atmosphere and optimize long-term carbon storage.
- **Prevent forest carbon loss from logging on state land.** Only 18% of the carbon in a logged tree is stored in long-lived forest products such as lumber. Most wood becomes short-lived products such as paper or is burned for heat or power, soon releasing its carbon.
- **Safeguard native biodiversity** by preserving about 8% of the state’s land base — an important step toward the goal of protecting 30% of our nation’s lands and waters by 2030.
- **Mitigate climate change impacts for all Massachusetts residents**, including environmental justice communities, which are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts, coastal areas facing sea-level rise, and urban centers that depend on intact watersheds for drinking water.
- **Provide direct benefits to people**, including clean air and water, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and potential for economic diversification.
- **Allow limited management activities** if proven to be necessary to protect public safety, endangered species, or the environment.
- **Safeguard sacred and historic sites** on DCR controlled land.

What this action would not do:

- Require additional funding.
- Reduce jobs in the private or public sectors.
- Affect how private landowners, municipalities, or counties use their land.
- Restrict how private foresters or loggers do business.
- Limit the Massachusetts wood products industry.
- Change Department of Conservation and Recreation private forest management programs.

For more information visit: www.savemassforests.com

8/25/22