

From: "bewillia@gw.dec.state.ny.us%inter2" <bewillia@gw.dec.state.ny.us>
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Email: bewillia@gw.dec.state.ny.us

FirstName: Bruce

LastName: Williamson

Address1: NYSDEC, Div. of Lands & Forests, Bureau of Private Land Services

Address2: 625 Broadway

City: Albany

State: New York

zipcode: 12233-4253

Question1: The 2007 Farm Bill needs to recognize that private forest owners, family "forest farmers", face many of the same challenges as family farm owners, and need every bit as much support and assistance to continue keeping their forest lands as forests, in sustainable production, and providing the full range of environmental and societal benefits that their forests provide. In New York, 83% of our forest land (over 45% of our entire State land base) is in private ownership. We need to make public investments in maintaining and sustaining these forests lands. As we have learned, the hard way, losing forests and open space can lead to greatly increased restoration and recovery costs down the road, whether to provide clean water, clean our air, or recover from storm surges or flooding.

Question2:

Question3:

Question4: This question frames the debate too narrowly. For 2007, Congress should recognize that the nation needs a comprehensive "Farm Forests (or Environmental Conservation) Bill" to meet our future needs.

"Agriculture" and farms are not the only natural resources and land uses that produce essential goods and services. Forests, and open space, are the major sources of clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and scenic beauty, that society depends on for its existence. US policy can not rely on these critical needs being met in, or from other parts of the world while we fail to do all we can to conserve, sustain and wisely manage our own vast resources.

The 2007 Farm and Environmental Conservation bill should include a strong Forestry Title, with support for existing, successful programs benefitting forests and forestry, particularly the Forest Land Enhancement Program, Forest Stewardship Program, Urban & Community Forestry Program and Forest Health Programs.

It should also develop a new forest investment program - a "Forest Ecosystem Services (or environmental benefits) Investment Program", administered by the US Forest Service, that supports private forest owners who sustainably manage their resources and provide public environmental benefits.

The Farm and Forests Bill should also continue to recognize the strong leadership (and mandate) of the US Forest Service, in close partnership with State Forestry Agencies, in promoting sustainable forest management on public and private forest lands. Their leadership and expertise should not be lost by giving their responsibilities and authorities for forest management and conservation to other Agencies.

Question5: In much of rural America, forests are the dominant land use, and have been the backbone of rural economies and growth. These

traditional industries and jobs are being lost, due to foreign competition, reduced access to resources, high costs, and lack of investment in technology. The US Forest Service "Economic Action Program", in partnership with and State and Federal "Forest Products Utilization and Marketing Programs", have, in the past, provided technical assistance, financial incentives and marketing support to maintain, strengthen and expand these vital U.S. businesses and local jobs. This program has been gutted in recent years and no longer is available to meet the needs of rural communities and, ultimately, forest owners, who depend on local markets for wood and forest products to make long term forest ownership and management economically-viable. The 2007 Farm and Forests Bill should direct and fund the US Forest Service to initiate and support a "National Wood Products Utilization and Marketing Strategy" to support and protect our domestic forest based industries, and help sustainably manage and conserve our forest resources. Such a program would also help forest resource managers cope with the growing threats from wildfires, hurricanes, floods, and invasive, exotic forest pests, such as the Asian long-horned beetle, Emerald ash borer and Sirex (or European) wood wasp.

Question6: In addition to agricultural product development and marketing efforts, the 2007 "Farm and Forest Bill" should authorize continued support for the unique, and vital US Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) research and development programs, and its outreach and technology transfer arm, the "Technology Marketing Unit" (TMU).