



SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

INDIANA SOCIETY

January 31, 2019

Senator Susan Glick
Chair, Senate Natural Resources Committee
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Senator Glick,

The Indiana Society of American Foresters is writing to express its professional perspective on SB610, proposing a state forest commission, which has been assigned to your natural resources committee for its consideration.

Natural resources planning and decision-making should rely heavily on science-based management and the education and experience of resource professionals. It is essential that all values be considered in the management of public forestlands. Laws and policies that govern Indiana's state forests allow sustainable timber harvesting with appropriate resource management and planning. Timber harvesting can be compatible with, and in fact support, other values such as fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreation. The make-up of the proposed commission, and expected results, does not suggest timber harvesting as a way to support these values will be adequately considered.

A State Forest Action Plan already exists with a comprehensive planning process, broader stakeholders and public input. The Plan is mandated by the federal Farm Bill and supervised by U. S. Forest Service. Federal dollars that Indiana receives for forest management on public and private lands are contingent on an approved State Forest Action Plan. The proposed legislation disregards the existing plan and does not meet the federal requirements for a new ten-year plan by June 2020.

A comprehensive planning process that considers the balance of recreation, resource management and wildlife habitat should consider the threats and needs of all IDNR lands, not just the 158,000 acres of state forestland. Natural resources issues occur statewide. Planning for all public lands should consider those concerns to ensure healthy and sustainable habitats. None of the other IDNR divisions are tasked with developing 100-year plans.

Sincerely,

William F. Minter
Policy Chair, Indiana Society of American Foresters

The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish standards of professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.