

November 22, 2017

The Honorable Eric J. Holcomb
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797



Dear Governor Holcomb,

I write to echo support of the Indiana Division of Forestry and the backing afforded to them by the current administration. The Indiana Society of American Foresters (ISAF) strongly encourages policy and decision makers, and the interested public, to recognize the valuable perspective that trained and experienced forestry professionals can provide to better understand and address forest resource issues and related policy and management concerns.

Recent media, special interest groups, and protests are clouding the view for the general public of what is proper forest management and sustainable forestry. ISAF supports commercial timber harvest as an appropriate objective and tool for promoting healthy, sustainable forests on public lands in Indiana. Where fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, or recreation is a priority commercial harvesting of timber can be compatible and even promote these values when carefully planned and supervised by professional foresters and other resource specialists. Commercial timber harvests provide important economic and social benefits that help sustain local communities, especially in rural areas. Recent research regarding the maturing forest and loss of early successional species indicates the importance of addressing Indiana's forest health, furthering the urgency for active management and in some instances restoration of public forests.

Current attempts are being made to restrict the abilities and scope of the Division of Forestry and its professionals to effectively manage those lands entrusted to them. ISAF opposes such attempts and any proposed legislation that would enable such restrictions. ISAF supports current methods and policies used by the Division of Forestry that effectively reflect the diverse and dynamic nature of forest ecosystems, such as a targeted mix of younger and older forest across the landscape rather than artificially fixed in specific locations.

I thank you for your support of the Division of Forestry and the professionals within it, I urge you to reject any special interest groups, media, and legislation that would restrict the ability of those professional to make management decisions on the public lands entrusted to them.

Scott Reckelhoff
Chair, Indiana Society of American Foresters