



March 23, 2023

The Honorable Foung Hawj, Chair
The Honorable Jennifer A. McEwen, Vice Chair
The Honorable Justin D. Eichorn, Ranking Minority Member
Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
1150 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF2904--A Bill for Extending the Sustainable Forest Resources Act to 2033

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council is pleased to express its appreciation and support for HF2904, a bill to extend the sunset clause of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act to June 30, 2033.

In the early 1990's, public concern erupted over whether logging and other management activities conducted on Minnesota's forests were being conducted in a sustainable manner. In 1995, the Minnesota Legislature answered that concern by providing a sustainable framework for managing its state forest resources in the form of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (MN Stat. 89A). Among its many comprehensive provisions, the Act provided for:

- Establishing the Minnesota Forest Resources Council to provide science based, stakeholder vetted, sustainable forest resource recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and other federal, state, and local governments.
- Creating a locally led, regional committee system responsible for long-term, landscape-level, strategic forest resource planning and coordination with the goal of balancing and sustainably maintaining the economic, ecological, and social values of Minnesota's forests.
- Requiring the development and periodic updating of voluntary, comprehensive, site-level, sustainable forest management and timber harvesting guidelines with a companion program for registering public concerns about forest management and timber harvesting practices.
- Establishing a multiagency, research advisory committee with responsibility for identifying and initiating priority forest resource research and securing informational needs.
- Directing the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to maintain a program for monitoring broad trends and conditions of the state's forest resources and monitoring the application of the timber harvesting and forest management guidelines under the oversight and direction of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council.
- Encouraging the dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, University of Minnesota, to maintain an Interagency Information Cooperative to coordinate the development and use of forest resources data in the state.

- Creating a state policy encouraging the continuation of sustainable forest education programs such as the Minnesota Logger Education Program and the University of Minnesota Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative.
- Encouraging a partnership of forest landowners, forest managers, and loggers within Minnesota in which the implementation of Minnesota Forest Resource Council recommendations can occur in a timely and coordinated manner across ownerships.

During the past 20 years, the favorable response of Minnesota's forests to this sustainable management framework can be measured by an increase in forest area of more than 1 million acres, an increase of more than 2.5 billion live trees, and an increase of about 3 million board feet of timber across the state.

In 2020, with the publication of its seminal report "Climate Change and Minnesota's Forests," the Minnesota Forest Resources Council turned its near full attention to understanding and addressing the impact of climate change on the state's forest resources. This report was instrumental in shaping the Governor's Climate Action Framework and has also led to a series of studies to better assess forest carbon sequestration, storage, and emission outcomes in our state.

Looking forward, the Minnesota Forest Resources Council understands that the Sustainable Forest Resources Act is as relevant, valuable, and needed now as it ever was. The challenges of offsetting greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change in Minnesota are daunting. This committee's continued support for the Sustainable Forest Resources Act is fundamental to our collective future success.

I respectfully request that this written testimony and enclosed 2021-2022 report on the implementation of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act be included in the record of the March 23 hearing of the Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee.



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Cc: Pete Aube, Chair
Rick Horton, Policy Committee
Patty Thielen, DNR

Enclosure:

“2021-2022 Report to the Minnesota Governor and Legislature on Implementation of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act”