



March 28, 2007

Governor Tim Pawlenty  
130 State Capitol  
75 Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

We would like you to consider the comments and recommendations in this letter on behalf of the members of the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (MN TWS). The Wildlife Society is an international, non-profit scientific and educational organization serving and representing wildlife professionals in all areas of wildlife conservation and resource management.

The primary objectives of The Wildlife Society are to: 1) Develop and promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources and of the environments upon which wildlife and humans depend; 2) Undertake an active role in preventing human-induced environmental degradation; 3) Increase awareness and appreciation of wildlife values; and 4) Seek the highest standards in all activities of the wildlife profession.

The following comments and recommendations are based on a review of the final report to the Governor from the Task Force on the Competitiveness of Minnesota's Primary Forest Products Industry, dated December 15, 2006.

The Minnesota Chapter of TWS appreciates the important role that Minnesota's primary forest products industry plays in the state economy and in the sustainable management of public and private forestlands within the state. MN TWS also believes that a healthy and thriving primary forest products industry—when committed to sustainable forest management—is essential to achieving many wildlife habitat goals and in sustaining many forms of wildlife-related recreation within the state.

While MN TWS supports efforts to seek near and long-term solutions to the problems currently facing the primary forest products industry, we are concerned that some of the task force recommendations may have a significant negative impact on wildlife species within the state.

Specifically, we are concerned that:

- 1) a recommendation for significant permanent increases in annual volumes of wood offered for sale will prove to be unsustainable over time, or will necessitate a similar reduction in acres reserved for water quality and wildlife habitat needs;
- 2) a recommendation to increase the application of pre-commercial thinning (which can have a negative effect on wildlife species who require higher density tree distribution to meet their habitat needs) may be a concern if the amount of increase—which is not specified in the task force report—is significant;
- 3) a recommendation to strongly limit or eliminate the application of extended rotation forest prescriptions will have a dramatic negative affect on a number of wildlife species who require older forests to meet their habitat needs;
- 4) recommendations encouraging the use of optimum economic rotation ages may lead to a reduction in mature forest wildlife habitat, if those ages are derived without consideration for the variance in species growth rates and quality of timber across the state;
- 5) forest certification status of state, county, industrial, and private forests may be jeopardized by implementation of the recommendations mentioned above, which would counteract a 2003 recommendation of the governor's task force that certification be aggressively pursued as a means to achieve a competitive advantage in domestic timber markets; and
- 6) implementation of the recommendations mentioned above will have a negative economic impact on money generated by consumptive (e.g. hunting, trapping) and non-consumptive (e.g. bird-watching, wildlife tourism) wildlife-oriented recreation.

We believe that solutions to problems facing the forest products industry should incorporate a balanced approach that considers the need for sustainable wildlife habitat and the important economic and recreational role that wildlife resources play in the state. To that end, we would like to request that professional wildlife expertise be added to the task force, with the objective of helping to ensure that recommendations consider the needs of wildlife and wildlife-oriented recreation in the state.

Sincerely,

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320-239-2667

cc: Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Mark Holsten