

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Private Members Bills:

The purpose of this correspondence is to voice opposition to the proposed Bill 22: An Act to Incorporate the Association of Registered Professional Foresters of New Brunswick. This proposed bill is substantially flawed and will surely create significant problems while achieving little public or environmental good.

I have reflected on this bill since it was first brought to my attention on March 15, 2012. The title, "*Bill 22: An Act to Incorporate the Association of Registered Professional Foresters of New Brunswick*" seems innocuous enough, similar to other acts of incorporation that would fit the requirements of a Private Members Bill. I have attempted to understand the Bill by considering its intent and consequences.

INTENT: As I am not privy to the considerations of the ARPFNB executive who constructed this Bill, I can only speculate on their intentions, as they are not stated in the Bill. I have had close ties with the Association and its members for many years. Based on the professional aspirations espoused by many ARPFNB members, I tried to find an admirable rationale for the language and directives in Bill 22. These are some of the potential intentions that I considered:

- **To protect the title 'Forester' from misuse and misappropriation:** This could be a potential problem, but certainly not one that I have observed in my thirty-year forestry career. If this is indeed the intent, then Bill 22 wildly misses the mark and victimizes many other individuals and groups in the collateral damage.
- **To improve forest management practices in NB:** This would assume that all other persons and individuals practicing forestry in NB are doing so improperly. I assure you that this not the case; I have seen excellent forest management carried out by landowners, contractors, first nation communities and forest technologists. Equally, I have witnessed questionable forest management by corporations, governments, and Registered Professional Foresters. To imply that the only people capable of the "practice of forestry" as defined by the broad and sweeping activities listed in Bill 22, reeks of arrogance, hubris, and self-deception.
- **Increase membership in ARPFNB:** I believe that the majority of graduates with a BSc in Forestry, who currently work in NB are not members of ARPFNB. They are currently unable to use the designation RPF after their name. Although this Bill may force otherwise unwilling 'foresters' to join the organization, it will be at the cost of alienation of those individuals, and all other groups who were not consulted or included in a proposed process that will change their lives and their businesses.
- **Corral power and authority over the practice of forestry:** This is certainly the most cynical perspective. However, when one considers the scope of the powers proposed, the exclusion of all other groups, the 11th hour proposed amendment to mollify the forest technicians and technologists, and the low profile but high consequences of a 'private members bill', all the pieces unfortunately fit best into this jaundiced rationale.

CONSEQUENCES: Some negative fallout from this proposed Bill is already being experienced; should it be enacted, there will be wide-spread and deeply felt economic and social consequences. There will be intended and perhaps unintended consequences for many individuals and groups, and of particular interest to me, to educational institutions. The following are only some the most obvious effects of Bill 22:

- **Economic:** The exclusion of many people who currently work in the field of forestry, and the forced replacement with members of ARPFNB, will result in a major shakeup in NB's work force. Some organizations will need to completely restructure, relocate out of the province or cease operations. Many of the contractors responsible for the provision of wood necessary to keep the forest products industry viable, will be unable to continue operations. Additionally, the cost of wood will increase, and at a time when the forest products industry is in a weakened and vulnerable position.
- **Affected Groups Were Not Consulted:** There are many groups that will experience significant changes in the cost, efficiency, and opportunity to do the work they have done for decades. These groups were not consulted in this process. The very fact that the process was introduced through a private members bill, with an innocuous title, hid the potential consequences from the majority of those affected. To attempt to engage these groups at this point may prove difficult, in light of possible mistrust and resentment. The groups and individuals affected is vast and as a minimum includes the following:
 - **Private landowners:** although private landowners will be able to manage their own property, they are restricted from managing property that is not in their name. This would seemingly include family members.
 - **Forestry contractors:** Contractors would be required to employ a consulting member of ARPFNB, therefore increasing cost and decreasing time efficiency. In many cases it would be the case of the highly experienced being supervised by someone who may have read a book on the subject.
 - **Related industries and businesses:** This would include forest road construction companies that are currently certified by the NB Department of the Environment
 - **First nation communities:** First Nations Communities are capable of managing for traditional cultural values that the scientific based management model neither recognizes nor understands.
 - **Affiliated professions:** The Executive Director of ARPFNB states *"Members of the ARPFNB place tremendous value on the great working relationship that foresters, forest technicians, forest technologists, and other forest community influentials have always enjoyed. Members of the ARPFNB look forward to continue working together as a team for the best management of our forest resources."* The exclusion of professionals, including biologists, ecologists, engineers, hydrologists, botanists, and others, may make 'team work' a challenging undertaking.
 - **Educational institutions:** The Maritime College of Forest Technology (Maritime Forest Ranger School) has been graduating world recognized forest technologists for over 65 years. We are recognized by the Society of American Foresters, the world's most influential body that governs forestry education. We are accredited by the North American Wildlife Technology Association, and the Council of Eastern Forest Technology Schools which represents all member forestry colleges east of the Mississippi. Our practices and methods are monitored by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission and the NB Department of Postsecondary Education.

Our procedure for recruiting and hiring instructors has served us well over the decades. We look for individuals with; first and foremost, the ability to communicate; secondly, credibility within the forestry community; and thirdly, knowledge of the subjects they will teach. We hire botanists, ecologists, sociologists, forest technologists, forest engineers, and foresters. We have never required a prospective instructor to be a member of a specific organization although many are members of professional organizations, including ARPFNB.

Bill 22 proposes that instructors must be members of ARPFNB. Based on MCFT's layers of international recognition, our well established hiring procedures, and our results of graduating well-educated, field-competent, and internationally desirable forest technologists, it is insulting and baffling that ARPFNB claim authority to direct our internal hiring and promotion practices. ARPFNB are not an educational institution, and should not have influence over a well established and successful College.

The introduction of the proposed bill has already harmed the reputation of MCFT. Students and their families are questioning why they are spending so much time and money to attain a diploma that is accepted everywhere in North America but not in NB. In a time when most forestry programs in Canada are failing due to lack of enrolment, this chilling effect on our reputation could have very negative consequences for the Maritime College of Forest Technology.

In summary, Bill 22 is a flawed document that seeks exclusive authority over the practice of forestry and forestry education. Damage has been done. If Bill 22 is allowed to progress further, the damage to businesses, educational institutions, professions, and individuals will be irreparable.

Thank you for your consideration.

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