



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wisconsin's leading timber and forest associations join
the Chair of the Forestry Committee and the Wisconsin Council on Forestry
in Opposition to the Forestry Mill Tax Sunset**

Rhineland, WI- The Board of Directors of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA), the Lake States Lumber Association (LSLA) and the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters (WCF) join the positions taken by the Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Forestry Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz) and the Wisconsin Council on Forestry in opposition to the sunset of the Forestry Mill Tax. These organizations, whom are involved in every aspect of the states timber and forest products industry, believe that elimination of the Forestry Mill Tax would have a negative impact on an industry that is one of the leading economic drivers of the state.

As the state struggles to find a long-term funding solution for the state's transportation program, and biennially debates how much funding is available to support K-12 education, the Medicaid program, and the Department of Corrections, we don't need to add further uncertainty into the mix by eliminating a dedicated revenue stream which adequately maintains, grows and protects one the state's most important resources.

These organizations support the Wisconsin Council on Forestry's (*the gubernatorially appointed council charged with advising the Governor, Legislature, Department of Natural Resources, and other state agencies on a host of forestry issues*) recommendation to the Joint Finance Committee which would:

- (1) maintain the FMT through this biennium;
- (2) audit the forestry account so we can be fully informed on how collected funds are allocated;
- (3) following the audit, make informed recommendations on how forestry funds are best spent.

GLTPA Board member Aaron Burmeister released the following statement:

“The Forestry mill tax of Wisconsin is important for us to maintain the forest on a responsible basis. It will allow us to continue valuable research on controlling exotic and invasive plants and insects that could bring doom to our forest resource!

We would much prefer that the Forestry Mill Tax remain in place and that the additional surplus general purpose revenue be used to fix our rural roads and bridges, so that our

industry and other industries in Wisconsin can efficiently get raw products from the forests and fields to our respective mills and markets.”

GLTPA Executive Committee member Mark Huempfer released the following statement:

“Wisconsin has some of the best sustainably managed forests in the world due to programs that have been established and maintained by the Division of Forestry within the Department of Natural Resources. Examples include the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, the state’s silvicultural guidelines, Good Neighbor Authority and industry leading best management practices. Unpredictable funding, whereby forestry will now have to compete every biennium for adequate funding with education, transportation and Medicaid, puts these programs and further innovation in jeopardy.”

Gunnar Bergersen, Lake States Lumber Association, released the following statement:

“The elimination of the Forest mill tax puts long term DNR forest management for slow growing timber in jeopardy. The public recognized the need for a reliable funding source for forest management when the forest mill tax was created by state wide referendum”

Don Peterson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Consulting Foresters:

“Wisconsin’s Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program is arguably the most successful incentive program for sustainable forest management of private woodlands in the country. With an enrollment of over 40,000 landowners with over 3.3 million acres of forest land, the MFL program requires twenty-five or fifty-year management plans. This long-term forest management philosophy would be threatened by the current proposed elimination of the Forestry Mill Tax. To effectively manage forests on a long-term, sustainable basis, a long-term sustainable funding source is needed such as the Forestry Mill Tax has provided since 1931.”

While our organizations appreciate the support the current Administration has shown to Wisconsin’s timber and forest products industry, we are concerned about the future and would prefer to continue to work with the Administration and the Legislature to find a solution whereby there can be continued reductions in property taxes and certainty in the funding of programs that ensure the long-term viability of this important resource.

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