



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON FORESTRY

Scott Walker, Governor

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March 30, 2017

Henry Schienebeck
Chairman
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Vice-Chair
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Troy Brown
Antigo

Matt Dallman
Tomahawk

Fred Souba
Wisconsin Rapids

Tom Hittle
Tomahawk

James Hoppe
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James Kerkman
Bangor

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Crivitz

Mark Rickenbach
Madison

Paul Strong
Rhineland

Sen. Tom Tiffany
Madison

Richard Wedepohl
Madison

Ken Zabel
Janesville

Ken Price
Stevens Point

Rep. Nick Milroy
Superior

Sen. Janet Bewley
Ashland

Jason Sjostrom
Hayward

To: The Honorable Senator Alberta Darling
The Honorable Representative John Nygren
Co-Chairs, Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance
C/O Committee Clerk
Joe Malkasian
State Capitol
Room 305 East
Madison, WI 53702

Subject: Biennial 2017-2019 State Budget - *Financial support for Master Logger Certification*

As you prepare to review and vote on the 2017-2019 State budget, Wisconsin's Council on Forestry (Council) would like to express our support for the Wisconsin Master Logger Certification program and request that state funding be re-established to support logger certification.

The Master Logger Certification program is a performance-based program sanctioned by the American Loggers Council that establishes standards of performance for the logging profession. It has been in existence in Wisconsin since 2003. It is overseen by the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA).

2005 Wisconsin Act 25 (2005-07 biennial budget) first established funding for certification scholarships to help defray the cost for individuals who wanted to be certified (\$50,000 in FY06 and \$150,000 in FY07 and beyond from the Forestry Account). Authorization was codified in s. 26.39(7) Wis. Stats. Administrative rule NR47.92 was approved in 2006 providing for a 50% cost-share of a logger's costs to become certified and be re-certified as a Master Logger.

2015 Wisconsin Act 55 (2015-17 biennial budget) eliminated the funding for this program.

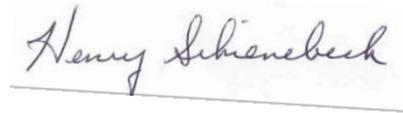
The level of performance and costs associated with being a Master Logger are substantial. The program monitors a logger's performance on public and private lands alike and Master Loggers must commit to higher performance measures on all lands. Master Logger timber sales have a higher assurance of a quality logging job, which is a benefit ecologically, financially and silviculturally to the landowners, forest industry, and forests of Wisconsin. Public and private forest landowners support the Master Logger program and see benefit from it. The program uses a complaint line where landowners can call in with any concerns; a provision that provides credibility and a quality improvement structure.

Wisconsin's Master Logger program is in need of funding to stay viable. Regular Master Logger certification costs \$2,100 and re-certification costs \$1,100. Current funding comes from logger's application fees and a Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee grant (2016). There are currently 50 Master Loggers and four new applicants under consideration. These loggers account for nearly 30% of all timber harvested in Wisconsin. There are close to 700 logging contractors / truckers listed for Wisconsin in total. Master Logger certification is a workforce development tool; it is a way for loggers to remain competitive in the business and improve their skills. Logging is a physically demanding and expensive business to be in. The Master Logger certification provides a way for loggers to distinguish themselves.

The Council requests \$75,000 annually to restore funding for a Master Logger grant program that was eliminated in the 2015-2017 biennium. The program would provide 50% cost-sharing for individuals seeking Master Logger certification status or recertification. Note that the original grant program helped fund Master Logger Chain of Custody Certification (MLCOC) The MLCOC has been funded by industry over the past year. MLCOC would not be part of the grant funding.

The Council sees the Master Logger Certification program as a key piece to achieving sustainable forest management in Wisconsin. Master Loggers set an example of excellence that we want all forestry professionals to work toward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry Schienebeck". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Henry Schienebeck
Council Chair

*Please note that due to the nature of their positions, Representatives Jeffrey Mursau and Nick Milroy, Senators Tom Tiffany and Janet Bewley, State Forester Fred Souba, Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest Supervisor Paul Strong, Jason Sjostrom, and Professor Mark Rickenbach respectfully withdraw their names as signatories of this letter.