



# WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON FORESTRY

Tony Evers, Governor

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Dr. William Van  
Lopik

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Tony Evers  
Governor of Wisconsin  
PO Box 7863  
Madison, WI 53707

## **RE: Forestry Revitalization Act – Letter of Support**

Governor Evers:

As the Wisconsin Council on Forestry is comprised of broad forestry stakeholder representation, we are providing this letter of support for the Forestry Revitalization Act (Senate Bill 456.)

The prospect of a new, reasonably large, market for wood fiber obtained sustainably from Wisconsin forests is an exciting opportunity. The Council has long been an advocate of efforts to support, develop and diversify our forest industry to provide commercial markets to support healthy forests, healthy Wisconsin communities, and the state's overall economy. Wisconsin's recent investment in the forest industry-wide strategic plan and roadmap effort (WI Forests FIRST), recommended and promoted by the Council, exemplifies the recognition that we must proactively invest in our forest industry. While Wisconsin remains the number one paper producing state in the nation, our forest industries are facing many challenges, as are our forests. Risks to both go hand in hand and impact each other.

We appreciate all your work over the last several years to attend to the Council's efforts and support healthy Wisconsin forests and the forest products industry.

The Council is also aware that Wisconsin is in a competitive position for new forest industries. Wisconsin is not alone in struggling with challenges being faced by their state's forest industries. Nationally, the forest products industry has been changing steadily over the past 3 decades. More recently, the forest products sector across the U.S. has been experiencing a dramatic increase in [facility closures](#). Hundreds of sawmills and wood products facilities have closed over the last decade. In a recent 18-month span at least 150 forest products businesses have closed, eliminating well over 10,000 family supporting jobs in the U.S.

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While we look forward to exciting opportunities for Wisconsin to attract new industries and markets, we also recognize the importance of supporting our existing industry partners, who have worked with landowners, forest managers and timber producers for decades. As a result, we now have a forest in Wisconsin that grows more than two times the amount of fiber that we harvest on an annual basis and supports an industry that contributes \$42 billion in total economic value to the state.

In conclusion, the Council on Forestry endorses initiatives to collaborate with emerging forest industries that open new wood markets and create jobs, while reinforcing the vitality of Wisconsin communities. These efforts must be socially sustainable and uphold Wisconsin's established environmental standards. To the extent that the Forestry Revitalization Act achieves these goals—recognizing the need that manufacturers adhere to both market sustainability and certification requirements, as well as Wisconsin's environmental regulations, this legislation deserves support.

Sincerely,

Tom Hittle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James J. Hittle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Wisconsin Council on Forestry Chair

\*Please note that due to the nature of their public positions, Council members Representatives Jeffrey Mursau and Lori Palmeri, Senators Romaine Quinn and Jamie Wall, State Forester Heather Berklund, and Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest Supervisor Janelle Crocker abstain as signatories.

\*\*Council member James Hoppe, representing the interests of the paper and pulp industry on the council, is also abstaining as a signatory.