



Empire State Forest Products Association

The people behind New York's healthy forests and quality wood products

www.esfpa.org

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January 31, 2020

Honorable Helene Weinstein
Member of Assembly
Chair
Assembly Ways & Means Committee
LOB 831
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Liz Krueger
Senator
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
416 Capital
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Assemblywoman Weinstein and Senator Krueger:

Enclosed please find comments from the Empire State Forest Products Association regarding the Governor's Proposed Executive Budget for 2021.

The Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA) represents the businesses, industries and landowners engaged in forest resource production and stewardship of New York's 19 million acres of forest. In total, \$22.9 billion dollars in statewide economic impact and nearly 100,000 jobs are attributable to our working forests and the forest related economic sectors.

There are nearly 700,000 private forest landowners who also depend on sound forest management and production to help them keep their forests as forests. Our vision for New York's working forests and wood products is that together they can provide economic, social and ecosystem benefits that meet the needs of society today and support the State's rural communities, so their benefits are there for generations to come.

In our comments, we are focusing on the Executive TED Article VII bill and those issues with the greatest potential impact on the State's forests and forest-based economy. We also are commenting on a couple of Capital Budget and Tax and Revenue proposals which have a direct benefit to or impact on our forests and the wood products sector. As the budget review process continues over the coming weeks, I and many of our Members will also be meeting with legislators on these and other issues related to the SFY 2020-21 State Budget.

Sincerely,

John K. Bartow, Jr.



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**Empire State Forest Products Association
Comments on the
SFY 2021 Executive Budget Proposal
1/31/20**

Capital Budget - Environmental Protection Fund:

The Empire State Forest products Association (ESFPA) supports the Governor's Budget appropriation request of \$300 million to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). We are pleased to see the continued funding requests for:

- **Land Acquisition** and our priority for State Working Forest Conservation Easements.
- **Urban Forestry** as this is often the largest interaction of urban residents and communities with trees and forests.
- **Biodiversity /Landowner Habitat Conservation Programs.** Our private forests represent over 14 million acres of habitat and biodiversity and we hope to see some of this effort benefit private forest lands to encourage sustainable forestry and achieve these goals.
- **Invasive Species** in both our water and terrestrial forest environments including funding for Hemlock Wholly Adelgid (\$500,000).
- **Regenerate NY grant program** for project cost sharing with private forest landowners to help address forest impacts from deer browsing, invasive species and to ensure the next generation of New York forests (\$500,000).
- **Wood Products Development Council** (\$200,000).

This year we support the Governor's addition of new commitments for:

- **Creating the Easements for Land Trusts** to expand the easement program to smaller forest landowners working with Land Trusts (\$3 million).
- **Creating the Community Forest** for municipalities and NGOs (\$500,000).

ESFPA does not support the Executive Proposals for:

- To the use of the EPF for agency personal services costs. The proposal would effectively reduce the \$300 million appropriation for projects by an unknown amount.
- Transfer of \$5 million from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to the EPF. Our environmental programs need to not only be complementary, but additive. We also have enough demand in our energy sectors for use of the RGGI funds that benefit most those who paid for RGGI.