

## **Council of Forest Resource Organization's Issue Summary**

Without attention to the business climate in a State where many forest industry firms are located, the viability of many rural and non-rural communities is in jeopardy. Without correction of some land use and taxation policies, many forest owners will lose their lands and forests and many of these will be converted to less desirable uses that degrade our environment.

The Council of Forest Resource Organizations urges executive and legislative branches to encourage and legislate (when necessary) the State's Agencies to take the following actions to support employers and land owners in contributing to the health of the economy of New York and local communities as well as ensuring that forests continue to provide all of the States' residents with "Open Space," clean water and recreation. Specifically:

### **Forest Property Taxation**

Our objective: Reform property tax and assessment programs to encourage landowners to maintain their forest land and reduce pressures on landowners that may cause parcelizing, liquidating and/or converting land to non-forest uses.

### **Wood Energy**

Our objective: To modify New York State's renewable energy policies to recognize and prioritize the use of sustainable in-state residual wood supplies to meet New York's clean energy needs.

### **Sustainable Forestry**

Our objective: To modify State policies to recognize the value of the forest products industry and our sustainable managed forests by providing incentives for forest management and encouraging State polities which favor forest products from sustainably managed lands.

### **Improving and Protecting Forest Health**

Our objective: To modify State policies to improve the health of our forests through a variety of measures designed to help public and private forests.

### **Funding and Legislative Action Letter**

CFRO, in a letter dated Nov. 5, 2012, made the following requests of the Executive Office –

- Increase the DEC's budget by \$1.5 million to enable increasing revenues from harvesting (offset by an additional \$4.85 million in increased revenues).
- Enhance the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$164 million, using revenue from the State's existing Bottle Bill and Real Estate Transfer Tax.
- Dedicate \$5 million of the EPF for invasive species and make Asian Long Horned Beetle (ALB) and Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) a priority.
- Provide \$1.2 million to fund the Wood Products Development Council (WPDC) to support expanded marketing of New York Wood Products.
- Support S 1361 that will streamline forest products contract sales. Current paperwork delays are costing the State revenues without any value added.
- Implement the 480a ii provision of tax law passed in 2008 that recognizes all American Tree Farms, Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative Certified lands as meeting the requirements for 480a enrollment. This action will save much in the way of DEC resources for reviewing plans already certified by national and international bodies that have already certified public as well as some private forests in New York.

#### **AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

Adirondack Landowners Association • Audubon New York • Catskill Forest Association • Catskill Landowner Association • Empire State Forest Products Association • NY Biomass Energy Association • NY Forest Owners Association • NY Farm Bureau • NYS Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee • NYS Society of American Foresters • NYS Tree Farm • NYS Urban Forestry Council • SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry • The Nature Conservancy • Watershed Agricultural Council • For More Information, Contact: Graham Cox, CFRO Chair at gcox@audubon.org or (518) 869-9731