

Timber Advisory Committee Call Notes

July 5, 2016

Deb Begalle

Attendees: Gary Melow, Jerry Grossman, Jon Lamy, Nick Monkevich, Larry Leefers, Rich Bowman, Steve Shine, Donna LaCourt, Bill O'Neill and Deb Begalle

1. **FRD Update**

- a. HB 5631 was signed into law. This bill amends section 50507 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. The bill expands the allowable use of the Forest Development Fund (FDF) to allow for the one-time use (Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016) of \$3,000,000 of the FDF to assist in financing the First Responder Presumed Coverage Fund. The First Responder Presumed Coverage Fund is to be used to fund worker's compensation benefits for eligible firefighters diagnosed with various forms of cancer that are ineligible for or denied other disability pension benefits. The Department of Natural Resources (Department) was opposed to the use of FDF for this purpose since the receipts into this fund are primarily derived from timber sale revenue and are used for forest management purposes.

2. **Land Plan Legislative Update**

- a. SB 39 is still in the Senate. This bill would remove the land cap but has several requirements for land disposal and access. There are still some concerns by the Department with some of the language and requirements in the bill.
- b. SBs 651-653 were signed that allows Commercial Forest property owners to convert to Qualified Forests without penalty for a period of time. (Steve Shine) Deb will ask Shirley Businski to work with MDARD on bullet points related to these bills, to distribute to TAC members.

3. **Budget Update**

- a. Fiscal Year 17 Appropriations bill was signed by the Governor last Wednesday. FRD has additional appropriation for forest management education and marketing, salvaging timber under risk of spruce budworm or other forest health issues, purchasing portable bridges and crane mats, and purchase of fire equipment.

4. **Proposal for a Presentation before Natural Resources Committee-Gary and/or Rich**

- a. Gary and Rich will draft an outline of talking points/subject matters for review at the August meeting. Last month's discussion was doing a presentation in the fall and/or spring to legislative Natural Resources committees.

5. **Finalize August TAC Meeting Location**

- a. Friday, August 12 is the next face-to-face meeting to be held in the Lansing or Detroit area. Kim is trying to confirm availability of the Outdoor Adventure Center. Kim will also poll members and try to arrange a flight for the UP folks.
- b. Agenda topics:
 - i. Presentation by Larry Leefers and Dave Neumann on the 2014 economic analysis. (Larry will be unable to attend in person.) 30 minutes
 - ii. Road Inventory Update - Deb & Bill
 - iii. Export Update- Donna 15 minutes
 - iv. Forest Management Education and Marketing Campaign- Bill & Deb
 - v. Update on Marketing & Utilization- Dave Neumann
 - vi. Update on Jerry's subcommittee
 - vii. Red Pine root rot – Deb

Other Discussion Items

1. Jon commented that the market for spruce and fir is poor. Jerry remarked that bolts and 3-year sale durations will help some of these sales sell, as well if there's a mix of species. Nick thought that the markets may open later this year, after some inventories are decreased.
2. **Good Neighbor Authority**
Work has started on the ground to prep timber sales on the 3 National Forests. The Specific Project Agreements have not been signed yet. There's one detail being worked at the national level and then they can be signed.

(One other agenda item may be an update on Northern Long-Eared Bat.)