



**November 21, 2023**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Forests as Climate Solutions” initiative during this second public hearing. Knowing the value of forests to water resources and their role in carbon sequestration, it is important to actively manage at least a portion of the forest to maintain a healthy forest.

The Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) supports good active forest management in general and in the MWRA water reservoirs singularly for the following reasons:

- Good forest management will maintain or improve water quality and availability for the MWRA communities,
- Good forest management will increase forest carbon sequestration and reduce MWRA’s carbon footprint,
- Logging is necessary to create an uneven-aged and diversified forest around the MWRA water reservoirs, and the regeneration needs to be effective to create this uneven-aged and diversified forest.

However, bad forest management will:

- Lead to a decrease in water quality and availability in the long term if the logging is not done right
- Limit the expected regrowth (not an exhaustive list) if:
  - The size of the opening is too large (risk of regrowth of even-aged trees),
  - The size and the conditions in which equipment is used lead to soil compaction, larger size openings, the destruction of advanced regeneration that would support the uneven-aged regrowth, and damage to some standing trees not included in the cut,
  - Animal browsing on exposed young sprouts.

WSCAC has, in the past, brought up some concerns about the lack of regeneration in some of the logged plots (due to some of the above causes) because this lack of regeneration can, in the long run, decrease the forest water filtration and carbon sequestration capacity.

The sole goal of WSCAC in providing these comments is to support and recommend that for public lands:

- The laws define the size and types of equipment to be used for logging and requirements (conditions to be met to operate the equipment) to be followed during harvesting to avoid soil compaction, destruction of advanced regeneration, and damage to standing trees not included in the cut,
- The laws define the size of plots scientifically proven to be indicated for diversified forest age and species,
- The laws require a periodic visit of logged plots to ensure the effectiveness of regrowth and indicate necessary measures to be taken if no regrowth or if an even-aged and mono-species regrowth occurs.
- Introduce moose hunting and increase deer hunting in the Quabbin reservoir to reduce their impacts on the regrowth essential to forest diversification, carbon sequestration, and water purification.

WSCAC comments have the goal not to blame any entities but to bring its contribution to improving forest management practice, especially in the MWRA water source reservoirs, which are located mostly on DCR's lands.

Sincerely,

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