

Enrolled No. R161-007

RESOLUTION

File No. 17-18/011



- SUPPORT FOR REINSTATING THE FORESTATION STATE TAX-

WHEREAS, the Forestation State Tax (mill tax) was enacted in the 1930's for the purpose of acquiring, preserving and developing the forests of the state and has served as a segregated funding source for the Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry and for grants and assistance to county forests and other programs that support, enhance and protect forest management, forest health and the timber industry; and

WHEREAS, the Mill Tax has served to support the state's \$24 billion forest products industry and helped support the state's \$20 billion tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the 2017-2019 Wisconsin State Budget proposal includes a provision to eliminate the Mill Tax and replace this forestry funding source with state General Purpose Revenues; and

WHEREAS, it will likely be difficult to fully fund necessary forestry programs in the future when competing against transportation, education, health care, and other programs for limited General Purpose Revenue funds.

WHEREAS, a stable source of funding is necessary for maintaining our public lands in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, an adequate fire program is critical for protecting Wisconsin's forests; and

WHEREAS, the forestry account funds a significant portion of Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program debt; and

WHEREAS, the forestry account funds a significant portion of Wisconsin's Payment In Lieu of Tax on state owned lands purchased under the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin County Forests have relied on forestry funding to meet the state's statutory obligation to "compensate counties for the public uses, benefits and privileges these lands provide; all in a manner which will provide a reasonable revenue to the towns in which such lands lie."

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors supports reinstating the Forestation State Tax but at a level more appropriate to funding Wisconsin's core forestry services as identified in Wis. Stat. § 70.58 (1).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors would support alternatives to the mill tax that are a segregated, permanent revenue source to help fund Wisconsin's vitally important forestry and timber industries and directs the county clerk to forward this resolution to the governor, assembly members and senators representing Eau Claire County and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Janet K. Loomis, County Clerk