

**Damaged Timber Removal
Assembly Bill 13**

*Timothy Gary,
Office of
Rep. Donald Friske*

Current law allows for an expedited sale process by DNR for timber on State Park Lands and State Forest Lands that has been damaged by fire or wind.

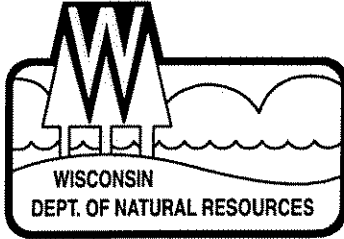
AB 13 expands DNR authority to all land under the DNR's authority (fish lands, flowages, scenic water areas, natural areas ADD REMAINDER HERE). It further clarifies which type of damaged timber qualifies for the expedited sale to include snow, hail and ice. AB 13 was amended in the Assembly Committee on Forestry to include insect infestation to the list of damages as well.

AB 13 also extends this expeditious power to Wisconsin Counties over County Forest lands.

Intent:

- (1) Streamline a process that is extremely dependent on time constraints. It can take as little as 30 days for disease to set in, take over a forested area and spread to non-diseased forests.
- (2) Remove the fuel for fire off of the forest floor. We need only look to Western States that have been hampered in their effort to remove damaged timber. The damaged timber, in combination with severe drought, serves to be a high-octane disaster waiting to happen.

Disease, insects and fire, like pollution, are not respecters of political boundaries. That is why Representative Friske would ask you to support delegating this authority to the political bodies in charge of protecting Wisconsin's environment as well as its non-forested communities.



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Assembly Bill 13

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Department of Natural Resources Testimony
Jeff Barkley, County Forest / Public Lands Specialist
Division of Forestry
October 20, 2003

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Barkley and I am the County Forest / Public Lands Specialist with the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Forestry. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you to discuss AB 13.

The Department of Natural Resources strongly supports AB 13. This bill, and its amendment, expand the authority of DNR and counties to sell timber damaged by fire, wind, snow, hail, ice, insects or disease in a manner that the DNR or county considers is in the best interest of state or county.

Each year the State undergoes a number of weather-related events that damage our forest resources. Efficient and timely salvage of the trees from these lands is imperative in order to harvest the timber before it degrades, minimize potential for insect and disease buildup, reduce fire hazard and lessen disruption to recreational trails and areas. Our forests, individual landowners, the economy and the public all benefit.

Current law streamlines and facilitates these efforts only on State Forests and State Parks and only for wind and fire events. The Department of Natural Resources manages nearly a million acres of land not designated as State Forest or State Park. In addition, we are in partnership with 29 counties managing over 2.35 million acres under the County Forest Law. The problems associated with salvage are not unique to the State Forests and Parks. All of the land under Department jurisdiction has the same urgency and need for action after catastrophic events. We feel this bill provides the consistency across designation and ownership lines necessary to streamline the salvage process, where it is warranted.

The all-to-recent history has shown us that catastrophic events requiring quick action are not all limited to wind and fire events. Snow, ice and even hail storms have proven to be equally destructive. By addressing only wind and fire, current law is inadequate to address these pressing needs. This bill encompasses all of the foreseeable events that do not allow us, as land managers, to anticipate and plan for.

AB 13 increases flexibility and allows objectives to be met in a timely manner. Please do not mistake the fact that property objectives and public interest are foremost in the minds of property managers in assessing how to respond to such incidents. The course of action

chosen relates to these factors. AB 13 increases flexibility but does not mandate a particular course of action. Furthermore, the Department makes every effort to offer sales in a competitive bidding process, even when unexpected events take place. This will not change. Competitive bidding allows all interested parties to participate and ensures the public receives the best price for its resource. Nonetheless, having the flexibility to use direct sales when timing is critical, will ensure that the public is best served in the response taken by the Department or County Forest.

We urge the committee to support AB 13 and advocate its passage by the Legislature.

I appreciate this opportunity to express the Department's support for AB 13 and would be glad to answer any questions you might have.

Assembly Bill 13

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Wisconsin County Forests Association Testimony

Colette J Matthews, Executive Secretary

518 West Somo Avenue

Tomahawk WI 54487

October 20, 2003

SUPPORT

Senator Kedzie and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Colette Matthews. I am the executive secretary for the Wisconsin County Forests Association. Thank you for allowing me to address you this afternoon. The Wisconsin County Forests Association strongly supports AB 13.

WCFA counties own and manage more than 2.35 million acres of county forest lands. Timber is the end product of many years of work by dedicated forestry professionals. Our member counties have begun to rely on timber sale income during their budget process.

\$ 34 mil
in 2002-
2003

Trees damaged by the weather or fire must be removed as quickly as possible if top dollar is to be obtained. AB13 provides the means for counties to quickly get damaged timber sold and harvested. This, in turn, allows reforestation to begin and the forest to heal.

Storm damaged timber can also cause loss of recreational dollars. Trails may be closed until they are cleaned up and made safe. The quicker trails are cleared and reopened, the better for the local economy. AB13 will allow quick sale and clean up of trails from storm damage.

When we first began work on this bill, our association did not ask to have diseased or insect damaged trees included in the bill. However, in the short period of time since the bill was first written, several harmful insects have shown up in northern forests. It is important that infested trees be removed quickly in order to prevent their spread to other trees in the forest. AB13 allows counties to get this done.

We urge you to support AB13.

Colette Matthews, Executive Secretary
Wisconsin County Forests Association
518 W Somo Avenue
Tomahawk WI 54487
715-453-6741

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MOTION ON ASSEMBLY BILL 13

Moved by **Senator Kedzie** that the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources recommends concurrence of Assembly Bill 13, relating to:

Sales of damaged timber by the department of natural resources and by counties from county forest lands

VOTE ON MOTION:

YES

NO

Signed: 

Date: 10/20/2003

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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VOTE ON MOTION:

YES
NO

Signed: *Michael J. Kedzie*
Date: 10/20/03

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VOTE ON MOTION:

YES X

NO _____

Signed: *Myra A. Rosen*

Date: *10/21/03*

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VOTE ON MOTION:

YES

NO

Signed: Robert W. Weirch

Date: 10-21-03

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VOTE ON MOTION:

YES _____

NO _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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[Handwritten date: 10/21/03]