

Natural Resource Development Association: Getting the Facts Straight - Meteor Timber Project - AB 956 Amendments

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Legislators,

On behalf of the Natural Resource Development Association, I wanted to share with you the following comments and facts as they pertain to any amendments made to AB 956, and the unnecessary lawsuit brought on by Clean Wisconsin and Midwest Environmental Advocates against Meteor Timber.

Instead of working together to make progress, extreme environmental groups like Clean Wisconsin and Midwest Environmental Advocates would rather obstruct the process and obfuscate reality by bringing baseless lawsuits against a good corporate citizen. Meteor Timber has acted in good faith to help create a nearly 40-to-1 acre mitigation plan and their efforts have fallen on deaf ears from extremist groups with an axe to grind against responsible resource development. This is a reasonable agreement that finds a solution to support both our economy and our environment — and if this plan fails, 300 acres will be lost to clear cutting, animals will be run off, and the landscape will be anything but pristine.

During the recent contested case hearing it was incorrectly stated that Red Maples and White Pine would not grow for up to forty years if this project is approved. As you can see from the attached photos, there are in fact both Red Maples and White Pines growing in the current cranberry bog area and surrounding woods. The Red Maple trees in the attached photo are naturally seeded into the cranberry beds. The current landowner has a very hard time removing them with chemicals in order to

ensure that his cranberry crop will grow more productively. The Red Maples are an annual growth problem in the beds, and propagating the belief that they will not grow is disingenuous at best.

The White Pines in the attached photo were planted by the landowner as well. There are a few of the trees that were planted at the wrong time of year and they did not survive due to heavy snowfall. However, the picture clearly illustrates that a two to three-year-old White Pine that was planted at the proper time of year, has seen steady growth and will thrive in the area. It is currently three feet tall. The seedlings were collected from the site and were very small when planted. Meteor Timber, as a company has vast expertise on the optimum timing for planting trees. They understand how and when to ensure that the growth will take place.

In 2017, the timber company that manages Meteor Timber, Timberland Investment Resources, have planted approximately 7 million trees across their footprint. Over the last four years in Wisconsin more than 400,000 trees have been planted with no survival issues by the timber company. In addition, all of Timberland Investment Resources properties are certified sustainable under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. Meteor Timber continues to manage any of their natural resource projects in a sustainable and responsible manner and maintains great stewardship of their community.

These photos and Meteor Timber's track record highlight that with proper mitigation and wetland restoration efforts these indigenous plants can and will not only survive, but thrive.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have already approved their permitting process for this project. Rather than see the land become clear cut, we strongly suggest that the Wisconsin State Senate support this initiative that will allow this project to flourish.

As an engaged and forthright corporate citizen, Meteor Timber has acted in good faith to ensure that Wisconsin's landscape stays pristine.

Meteor Timber Project Facts:

- On top of DNR Permit requirements which include Meteor Timber creating or preserving more than 630 acres of land for wetland restoration, the company has independently offered Clean Wisconsin and Midwest Environment

Advocates more than 450 additional offsite acres to be placed into a conservation easement in perpetuity. This would bring the total amount of acres created or preserved to more than 1,000.

- The project in total will touch 16 acres of private land, that if not responsibly developed will be clear cut by the owner to ensure financial viability. In addition to the 16 acres for the project the owner would clear cut at least another 285 acres.
- The Township of Knapp in Jackson County and the Township of Grant in Monroe County have both voted unanimously in support of the project.
- Meteor Timber has also committed to naturalizing and reintroducing native-trout to a local creek.
- Meteor Timber has pledged thousands of dollars to create a habitat for the Karner Blue Butterfly, an endangered species.
- All settlement offers sent by Meteor Timber have not been responded to by Midwest Environmental Advocates or Clean Wisconsin.
- This project will include nearly 300 immediate construction jobs that will help the local economy flourish.
- Once this project is up and running it will bring more than 100 long term, family supporting jobs to the community.
- Overall this project would be a \$70 million dollar investment by Meteor Timber into the local community.