

Message

From: Earl Barrs [ebarrs@duesouthinvestments.com]
Sent: 5/8/2018 6:08:46 PM
To: Bennett, Tate [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=1fa92542f7ca4d01973b18b2f11b9141-Bennett, El]; Lyons, Troy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=15e4881c95044ab49c6c35a0f5eef67e-Lyons, Troy]; Letendre, Daisy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b691cccca6264ae09df7054c7f1019cb-Letendre, DJ]; Shimmin, Kaitlyn [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=becb3f33f9a14acd8112d898cc7853c6-Shimmin, Ka]; McMurray, Forrest [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=344246fb2cb643bfab4f92fe016566e2-McMurray, F]
CC: Wanda Barrs [wbarrs@duesouthinvestments.com]; Earl Barrs [ebarrs@duesouthinvestments.com]
Subject: FW: Forest Landowner Response to "Pruitt Wrong on Burning Forest for Energy"
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

To our friends at EPA,

Please share with Administrator Pruitt my response below to the editors of the NY Times concerning the article published in last Thursday's paper. It was a great day for our small community to have the administrator come and celebrate earth day and make his announcement concerning EPA's ruling on the carbon neutrality of biomass. You folks are welcome at our place any time!

Earl D. Barrs
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Ex. 6 cell



From: Earl Barrs
Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2018 11:48 AM
To: letters@nytimes.com
Cc: Earl Barrs
Subject: Forest Landowner Response to "Pruitt Wrong on Burning Forest for Energy"

Biomass article: www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/opinion/Pruitt-forest-burning-energy

Re: Pruitt Wrong on Burning Forest for Energy
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

It is with great pride that I have the opportunity to respond to the article written by the esteemed authors whom have so eloquently attempted to convince your readers of the believed misstep taken by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and his position on converting biomass to energy. Administrator Pruitt was in our small community as a result of an invitation by my wife and me to help him see and understand first hand, the challenges that family forest owners face in growing and managing our forest. While I will leave it to others more qualified than I to debate the science and the effect of converting wood to energy on our climate; I would like to share with your readers the benefits of using wood for energy for tree farmers like me and my community.

I am a tree farmer who happens to have a degree in forestry and in the past has been named National Tree Farmer of the Year by the American Forest Foundation. In addition, I have served on the boards of numerous state and national forestry and landowner organizations. My livelihood is not earned among the elites in an academic setting but is made in the forest that the authors seem to know and care so much about. It is from my vantage point that I would like to share with you a different perspective.

While the trees on college campuses are large, stately and often have individual care and attention, I live in a state, Georgia, which is two thirds forested and provides raw materials for one of the largest industries of our state. Our forests are predominately owned not by large corporations, but by families like mine that help provide a \$32 billion dollar overall economic impact, along with 133,000 jobs to hardworking Georgians. The majority of these jobs are located in rural areas, and without them many would find themselves on some type of government assistance. As a first generation forest landowner, I depend on my forest to help provide an income for me and my family. Unfortunately, after spending over 30 years planting, growing and managing my forest to a point where I can harvest a crop, I find myself without good dependable markets where I can sell my trees. Many of the small local sawmills in my area have been bought and markets consolidated by Canadian companies that reduce competition in the marketplace. The effect of this to the landowner has been a sharp reduction in timber prices. Therefore, the trees that I have been nurturing through the risks of drought, fire, insects and disease for most of my career are now worth less today than they were 40 years ago.

I have no choice but to sell my trees for what the current market brings, but I do have a choice if I should replant them or convert my land to other uses. Much of my forest land has the potential to be converted to other uses like row crop agriculture. Many of my neighbors have chosen this more lucrative option. Now instead of planting trees and harvesting some of them every fifteen to thirty years, they plant and harvest their cotton, corn or peanuts every year. But that is not the worst of it. They clear up the forest and dig irrigation wells that can pump thousands of gallons of water from the aquifer a day. In addition they go in their fields with large equipment on multiple trips to plant, spread fertilizers (which lead to an increase in greenhouse gases, a main component in causing global warming), and chemicals for weed and insect control all of which increase the risk of soil erosion and compaction. At this point they can harvest a more profitable crop with the advantage of receiving their income annually. This is certainly

not a criticism of agriculture; it is just a comparison of land uses that we as landowners have to choose from.

All of this to say, that without competitive markets for our trees, forest landowners will be forced to look for alternatives to earning income from their land. Biomass to energy provides landowners with another market option allowing us to keep our forest in forest and not be forced to convert them to other less environmentally friendly uses. It is a well-known fact that the reason we have so many trees in Georgia is that we have traditionally had strong, vibrant and healthy markets for which to sell our trees.

Academics and environmentalist alike who are critical of allowing forest owners to having another market for their trees are only seeing one side of the equation. I invite these ladies and gentlemen along with the editors of the NY Times to step from behind their wooden desks and visit my forest to observe the real life cycle of forest and foresters and the job we do to protect our environment. The same forest that clean the air we breathe, the water we drink, provide homes to wildlife in addition to providing over 5,000 products that we use every day. Add to this, jobs for thousands in rural communities where Amazon will never consider building their new headquarters.

Earl D. Barrs
Forest Landowner
Tree Farmer of the Year, 2009

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