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Michigan House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Room 521, HOB
Lansing, MI 48909
Rep. Ben Glardon, Chairman

Chairman Glardon and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of senate bills 706, 707, and 708.

As the Executive Director of the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association (GLTPA), I represent a group of over 1,000 members, located primarily in Wisconsin and Michigan, who come from all aspects of the timber industry. Members include: loggers, truckers, foresters, mills, landowners, conservationists, sportsmen and women, school districts and townships. We advocate sustainable forestry, which is good for the environment and the economy.

In Michigan, our industry employs more than 38,000 people. In 2013, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Timber Advisory Council developed five-year goals for our industry, one of which is to increase forestry's economic impact from \$14 billion to \$20 billion per year. The groups proposed achieving this increase in part through supporting existing industry. Michigan has already hit this goal. Senate bills 706, 707, and 708 will help continue this success.

There is no forestry without sufficient infrastructure. Financial strain on local governments causes them to post weight limits on roads and bridges. These postings can add substantial cost to silvicultural practices, sometimes making a project economically unworkable. We realize road authorities have many constituencies to consider. However, while increasing restrictions and fees on the forest products industry might help fill budget gaps in the short run, overtime these practices will decrease the tax base making infrastructure funding even more difficult.

Senate bills 706, 707, and 708 help keep our industry profitable without compromising on benefits to the public. SB 706 would stop road authorities from charging extra fees or enacting regulations on vehicles used for forestry if the vehicles meet all of the height, size, and load limits required by chapter six of the state code. SB 707 would clarify that



adding gravel to a driveway that is connected to a highway does not require a permit by the state. SB 708 specifies that county road commissions cannot require a permit for activity that was otherwise legal under state law. These changes will decrease costs to industry, not only through limiting direct fees, but also by saving substantial amounts of time invested by both industry and government.

As an association, we strive to work with state and local governments to reach workable solutions. We welcome any town, county or other group who would like to work with us to reach out. We understand the financial pressures road authorities face, but we will not make the state stronger or meet our goals by undermining the forest products industry.

Thank you again and I am happy to take questions.