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Michigan House of Representatives
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
PO Box 30014
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Dear Committee Members:

The Michigan Forest Products Council (MFPC) and its membership write to you in opposition to HB 4632, specifically the proposed increase for log plate registration. MFPC would like to impress upon the committee that the current treatment of plate registration is not a special set-aside, but a fee adapted to the needs and limitations of the logging industry.

As the demand for funding Michigan's infrastructural needs reaches its tipping point, many have begun to question this rationale. We urge you to keep in mind the following key points, as the committee moves forward in its discussion of this bill:

- Logging trucks are highly specialized vehicles. Unlike other commercial freight vehicles, logging trucks are designed only to carry logs and can only be used for that purpose. Therefore, all freight trucks are not created equal and cannot be treated as such.

- Logging trucks only spend a short time on Michigan's public roads. Log trucks spend about half of their time on secondary non-tax roads, which are maintained privately by loggers. Additionally, these specialized trucks spend weeks parked due to the spring thaw, rainy seasons, and depressed wood markets.

- Logging trucks are empty 50% of the time. Logging trucks are used to haul material from the job site to be either loaded to a train or to the mill itself. Unlike other kinds of freight activity, which haul cargo coming and going, log trucks always return to the job site empty.

- The log plate does not exempt log trucks from paying their dues. Log trucks already pay additional taxes for their trucks, trailers, tires, and fuel, which contribute to road upkeep.

Our industry operates in a particularly fixed-cost market. Unlike other industries, loggers and logging companies cannot transfer operation costs onto the consumers. This industry sector is simultaneously crucial to the livelihood of rural Michigan communities and a struggling sector of Michigan's economy. As we look to grow and transform our land-based industries, on behalf of MFPC, I urge you to weigh seriously the long-term consequences of log plate elimination.

Sincerely,

Scott Robbins

Scott Robbins
DIRECTOR OF SFI & PUBLIC AFFAIRS || Michigan Forest Products Council