

## Problems w/the Proposed Changes

### General

- 1) The DEC developed changes to 480a without consulting relevant research, collecting data or conducting an analysis.
- 2) The DEC has not provided people currently enrolled in 480a with information about the proposed changes to 480a.
- 3) The New York Society of American Foresters does not support the proposed revisions.
- 4) The New York Forest Owner's Association does not support the proposed revisions.

### Changes to 480a (itself)

- 3) The DEC will increase property taxes by 100% for forest land enrolled in 480a after 10 years.
- 4) When a property enrolled in 480a is sold to a non-family member, the 480a exemption terminates.
- 5) The DEC will not allow new enrollments into 480a.
- 6) The DEC will not allow people who are grandfathered into 480a, to amend their plans, to enroll new acreage.
- 7) The DEC claims it needs to change 480a to reduce its workload. But they're creating a new program that increases the number of eligible landowners and the potential for more work.

### New 480b (Forest Certification Option)

- 8) Forest certification is not an option for landowners. The actual cost for certifying a 2,500 acre property is about \$10,000 every five years. And this cost is the same regardless of how small your property is!
- 9) The DEC "may include some forms of group certification" but they have not identified or committed to these options.

### New 480b (Sustainable Forest Management Option)

10. The 40% reduction in assessment provided by 480b is not enough financial incentive to make up for 480b's restrictions on developing and subdividing the property.

**Bullet points to use in developing letters to DEC and state legislators regarding the proposed revisions to 480-a.**

1. My property has been committed to the NYS 480-a forest management program since \_\_\_\_\_. (you can find your "Original Certification Date" in the top right corner of your Certificate of Approval form, or you can email me and I will tell you the date). I enrolled my property in this program with the understanding that this would be a tool by which I could conserve and improve my woodland property over the long term. I considered this a contract between myself and the state of New York whereby I was committing my property to long term management and forest protection in exchange for a significant reduction in the property taxes on this land. I don't feel it is fair for the state to nullify this contract, or to drastically reduce the tax exemption that was promised me when I signed this contract.
2. I have followed the requirements of the 480-a program for the entire time my property has been enrolled. I have carried out improvement and maintenance treatments as needed and required, expending personal funds to complete much of this work. This was all done with the understanding that this would be an ongoing program and that early management work I did would be rewarded with improved forest health and eventual profits from harvesting of quality forest products. Realizing that the proper time to harvest forest products from my land may still be many years away, it is unfair for the program to be changed as proposed and that the taxes on my forest land would double in 10 years.
3. The DEC does not and has not promoted the 480-a program over the years. I personally heard about the program from \_\_\_\_\_, and was provided detailed information on the program from my consulting forester, not from the DEC. Better promotion and information on the program could help to solve the problem of a lack of enrollees.
4. If you recently committed to 480-a, you did this with the understanding that this was a long term commitment and that the ongoing tax reduction would enable you to maintain and improve the forest land. There was no information provided to you that there might be major changes to the program you signed up for.
5. Why has the DEC gone this far with proposed major revisions to the 480-a law without any notification or request for comments from the landowners who are enrolled in the program? I only learned about the proposed revisions from my consulting forester.
6. The 480-a program has worked well for me and is very important to my ability to maintain and manage my forest land. Without the 80% tax reduction, the high cost of land taxes might cause me to sell part or all of my forest land. This would be a risk to the overall goal of preserving forest land acres as some of this land might be developed or converted to non forest uses. At the least I would likely be inclined to do less forest management work with increased costs, and this could lead to long term reduction in the environmental quality.
7. I am not in favor of the proposed revisions.

## NYS LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

To preserve and prevent the sunset of 480a, now is the time to contact (via email, letter, phone call, etc.) your NYS Senator and Assembly persons. To find your local State Senator/Member of Assembly:

NYS Senate - <https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>

NYS Assembly - <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/search/>

It would also be of huge benefit to call or copy your email and/or letter to the following:

John Flanagan, Majority Leader  
State Capital Room 330  
Albany, NY 12247  
518-455-2071  
flanagan@nysenate.gov

Catharine Young, Senator  
Chair Senate Finance Committee  
State Capital Room 428  
Albany, NY 12247  
518-455-3563  
cyoung@nysenate.gov

Joe Thomas O'Mara, Senator  
Chair Senate Environmental Cons. Committee  
LOB  
Room 307  
Albany, NY 12447  
518-455-2091  
omara@nysenate.gov

Patty Ritchie, Senator  
Co-Chair, Rural Res. Comm.  
LOB  
Room 412  
Albany, NY 12247  
518-455-3438  
ritchie@nysenate.gov

Carl Heastie  
Speaker of the NYS Assembly  
LOB 932  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-3791  
speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

Herman Farrell  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee  
LOB 923  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5491  
farrellh@assembly.state.ny.us

Steve Englebright  
Chair Environmental Cons. Committee  
LOB 621  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4804  
engles@assembly.state.ny.us

Frank Skartados  
Co-Chair Rural Resource Commission  
LOB 435  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5762  
skartadosf@assembly.state.ny.us

Additionally you could voice your opinions, w/Governor Andrew Cuomo, via the following:

Andrew Cuomo, Governor  
NYS Capital Building  
Albany, NY 12224  
518-474-8390

Rosemary Powers, Deputy Director of State Operations  
518-473-9958  
rosemary.power@exec.ny.gov

Kate Dineen, Assistant Secretary to the Governor for the Environment  
518-408-2552  
kate.dineen@exec.ny.gov