

# Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

## Summary Findings of a 2012 Study

### The Costs and Benefits of FSC Certification of DCNR Forests

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1. In November 2012, the Pennsylvania Joint House and Senate "Legislative Budget and Finance Committee" (LB&FC) released the results of a six-month study of DCNR's forest-certification program and its relationship to the PGC's deer-reduction program.
2. According to the LB&FC Report, in 1998 DCNR agreed to enter into its first "forest (green) certification award" program with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) of Bonn, Germany.
3. As part of the first green-certification agreement in 1998, Bryon Shissler (acting as a representative for FSC) and Dan Devlin (currently Chief of DCNR's Bureau of Forestry) designed a stipulation that required reduction of the deer herd in order for DCNR to achieve the green-certification award.
4. By 1999, Calvin DuBrock and the PGC complied with DCNR's request and the deer-reduction program began shortly thereafter.
5. According to the LB&FC Report, PGC's deer-reduction program was caused by the FSC/DCNR "forest (green) certification award" program.
6. According to the LB&FC Report, although the green-certification program was intended to increase DCNR's revenue from the sale of state forest timber, the costs of green certification far outweigh the benefits.
  - a. As of 2011, the annual benefit to DCNR was about \$1.2 million per year.
  - b. As of 2011, the green-certification/deer-reduction program had resulted in the direct loss of about 117,000 hunters (license buyers) and an additional unrealized gain of 52,000 hunters as had been occurring nationally – representing a total loss of 179,000 hunters from 2001-2011. Considering an annual economic impact of \$2,484 per hunter as determined by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service study, the State has experienced a loss of \$415 million in economic activity for that year alone -- \$285 million in direct costs and another \$130 million from losing the unrealized national gain.
7. **Using the LB&FC findings from 2001 and 2011, a regression analysis indicates that as of 2013 the FSC/DCNR/PGC green-certification/deer-reduction program has cost the Commonwealth a total of \$3.39 "billion" in lost economic activity.**
8. According to the LB&FC Report, green certification is based on politics instead of science, and is often steered by environmental agendas.
9. In summary, the FSC/DCNR/PGC green-certification/deer-reduction program was intended to benefit foresters, and has resulted in great costs to sportsmen, the State's economy, and the general citizenry. As a result, DCNR is operating in violation of FSC standards, and PGC is in violation of State Law – Title 34, Section 322(c)(13).