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The Honorable Terry Roy, Chairman  
Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
New Hampshire House of Representatives  
Legislative Office Building, Room 204  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Roy and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for accepting this testimony from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (Forest Society) in support of Senate Bill 15, legislation regarding the use of tree stands and observation blinds.

As you may know, the Forest Society is a private, non-profit land trust. We own approximately 60,000 acres over 191 different properties throughout New Hampshire. Because hunting and hunter access to privately-owned is part of our state's traditions, we allow hunting, as well as fishing and trapping, on all these properties.

Our current policy for the use of tree stands is as follows:

- Tree stands that are affixed to trees with screws, nails, or other hardware that is inserted into the tree are prohibited.
- Temporary (strapped) tree stands are allowed although we encourage owners to list their name and contact information on their stand.
- Temporary stands must be removed following the hunting season for which they were erected.

We are supportive of SB 15 for two reasons. First, it clarifies that landowner permission is required only for permanent tree stands. This is a huge point of confusion for many people. Second, it includes a labeling requirement. Section VIII states that all tree stands or observation blinds shall be labeled with the name and contact information of the owner of the tree stand or observation blind in a clearly visible manner. The labeling requirement is important because there have been times when we have found permanent tree stands on our properties but we have no way of knowing who they belong to. If we have a timber harvest planned, for example, the presense of a tree stand may interfere with our ability conduct that harvest. The labeling requirement will allow to easily notify the owner of the need to move their tree stand.

To summarize, we believe SB 15 will help strengthen the relationship between private landowners and hunters. We encourage the committee to support the bill. Thank you again for considering this testimony.

Sincerely,

Matt Leahy, Public Policy Director  
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests