

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 2017-008
DATE July 24, 2017

**AN ORDER TO OFFER ASSISTANCE TO MUNICIPALITIES IN THE REVIEW OF
LAND ENROLLED IN THE TREE GROWTH TAX LAW PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Maine's natural resources are a fundamental part of our lives as Mainers and our State's economy; and

WHEREAS, proper enforcement of our Tree Growth Tax Law Program ensures that these assets are managed for the benefit of all Mainers; and

WHEREAS, the Tree Growth Tax Law Program provides an incentive for woodland owners to actively manage their property; and

WHEREAS, woodland property enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program covers 11.2 million acres in the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, woodland owners who participate in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program are required to have a forest management plan and are required to follow the conditions of their plan; and

WHEREAS, woodland owners who participate in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program shift a portion of their property tax burden to other property taxpayers in their municipalities; and

WHEREAS, municipal assessors are responsible for administering the Tree Growth Tax Law Program and assessors can request technical assistance from the Maine District Foresters and Forest Rangers from the Bureau of Forestry under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Forestry found in its previous work with municipal assessors that some woodland owners who participate in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program are not fulfilling their responsibilities under the program; and


WHEREAS, the failure of some woodland owners to follow their forest management plan under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program jeopardizes the credibility of the program and creates perennial uncertainty about the program's stability among the large percentage of woodland owners who are fulfilling their responsibilities under their forest management plans;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby direct the Bureau of Forestry to undertake the following actions to ensure that municipal assessors can carry out their administrative duties under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program:

1. Contact all municipal assessors in the state and offer technical assistance in reviewing the forest management plans of parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program;
2. When requested by a municipal assessor, a district forester will review a forest management plan and provide recommendations if needed on how to fulfill the requirements of the forest management plan to both the municipal assessor and the woodland owner;
3. Assist any woodland owners found not in compliance with the Tree Growth Tax Law Program and help bring their forest management plans into compliance within a reasonable amount of time;

The Bureau of Forestry shall submit a report of its findings with respect to the above actions to the Office of the Governor no later than December 15 of calendar year starting in 2017.

The effective date of this Executive Order is July 24, 2017.


Paul R. LePage, Governor