

County of Aroostook

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May 02, 2018

Mr. Tim Beaucage
Senior Planner, Land Use Planning Commission
22 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

Re: Zoning Petition ZP-768

The County of Aroostook certainly welcomes and appreciates the time and efforts that Allagash Timberlands LP, Aroostook Timberlands LLC, and Maine Woodlands Realty Company (Irving) have put into the Fish River Chain of Lakes Concept Plan. With plans to rezone over 51,000 acres to help manage and sustain existing uses, this project also provides the opportunity for both development and conservation projects which, if implemented, would certainly be beneficial to the local economy, recreational, traditional and other uses within the Unorganized Territories of northern Maine.

With more opportunities for development and the enhancement of recreational, conservation and forestry activities, this plan also creates the need for an increase in the various services required to adequately protect and sustain these activities. The provision of essential services throughout the Unorganized Territory of Aroostook County has always been a challenge, primarily because of limited access, travel distance and time. More times than not, emergency response time is critical in avoiding major destruction of property, forestland, and the unfortunate loss of life.

The Concept Plan encompasses the areas around four lakes in northern Aroostook County; Long Lake, Mud Lake, Cross Lake and Square Lake. Fire protection for this entire region is provided by North Lakes Fire & Rescue, and 100% volunteer department with three (3) sub-stations, and extremely aged equipment. Response time to many areas around these lakes can vary from minutes to fractions of an hour. Other essential services facing the same challenges would be ambulance, law enforcement, and forest fire protection.

Aroostook County officials, specifically the Community Services Director and EMA Director/North Lakes Chief have expressed great concern about the infrastructure and conditions of access roads leading into many areas of the proposed Concept Plan. The question has been raised at many meetings; will there be any upgrades to the road conditions, especially to the longer distance roads in much more rural areas. Improvements will definitely have an impact in response, hence the greater chance of saving a structure, forestland or even a life.

Aroostook County has also been very proactive in supporting public access to our lakes and waterways. There have been some conversations with officials from Aroostook Timberlands regarding the future maintenance of public access sites on Cross Lake and Long Lake (T17R3) Van Buren Cove. The Community Services Director of Aroostook County's Unorganized Territory has expressed interest in having the County provide the maintenance to these sites through contractual agreements. However, insurance requirements specify that these parcels be owned by the County of Aroostook. It would be in the best interest of all parties involved that these small but invaluable locations be deeded over to the County of Aroostook.

Best regards,



Paul Bernier
Community Services Director
County of Aroostook, Unorganized Territory



Darren Woods
Aroostook County EMA Director
Fire Chief, North Lakes Fire & Rescue

Beaucage, Timothy

Subject: FW: Irving Concept Plan: Hearing Notice and Schedule

From: Darren Woods [mailto:darren@aroostookema.com]

Sent: Wednesday, May 02, 2018 3:03 PM

To: MacLean, Billie J <Billie.J.MacLean@maine.gov>; Paul Bernier <paul@aroostook.me.us>; Beaucage, Timothy <Timothy.Beaucage@maine.gov>

Cc: Ryan D. Pelletier <ryan@aroostook.me.us>

Subject: RE: Irving Concept Plan: Hearing Notice and Schedule

I plan to be there with Paul. The only thing that may change that is a potential disaster issue that I may need to deal with. (I say that based on current events)

Darren R. Woods, Director
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