



Briefing Paper #1

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## Wisconsin penalizes landowners who plant trees

Recently released Department of Revenue data shows that planting trees in Wisconsin leads to significant property tax increases for many of the state's 155,000 private forest land owners.

| Land Classification | Net tax per acre |         |         |         | % change |
|---------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
|                     | 1995/96          | 2000/01 | 2005/06 | 2013/14 |          |
| Agricultural land   | \$15.23          | \$8.28  | \$3.00  | \$3.32  | - 78%    |
| Forest Land         | \$7.78           | \$12.90 | \$10.36 | \$33.75 | +434%    |

This large and increasing disparity in tax rates between lands that produce annual crops and those that produce a crop only after several decades has created a major incentive for landowners to either clear cut their woodlands, pasture them with livestock, or sell the land for development.

*The Wisconsin Alliance of Forest Owners (WAFO) is a new coalition of private woodland owners, tree farmers who produce the majority of the timber that powers the state's \$330 million dollar forest products industry. WAFO recognizes that growing trees is often the most appropriate use of open lands and contributes immensely to Wisconsin's environment, providing clean air, water, and wildlife habitat.*

*Although trees are more economically significant to the state than any other single agricultural crop, this crop has been singularly excluded from receiving many of the incentives the state offers producers of other agricultural products. WAFO is dedicated towards working for the fair treatment of tree farmers who provide the raw material needed by Wisconsin's forest products industry.*