

Testimony provided by:  
John S. Kiesendahl  
Owner & CEO, Woodloch Pines, Inc.  
Hawley, PA

Before  
Senate Labor & Industry Committee  
May 5, 2015

Senator Lisa Baker, Counsel & Executive Director R. Michael Cortez, and members of the Senate Labor & Industry Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the important topic of increasing the state's minimum wage rate.

My name is John Kiesendahl. I am the owner and C.E.O. of Woodloch Pines, Inc., a family-owned and operated hospitality business in the Pocono Mountains where 35% of the jobs come from the tourism industry.

Here is a brief background of our business:

In 1958, my parents purchased a small summer boarding house on Lake Teedyuskung in Pike County for \$40,000. We had accommodations for 30 guests, 1 year-round employee, no running drinking water, and it cost only \$6/day including 3 meals to stay at Woodloch.

Although we had very humble beginnings, today Woodloch accommodates over 1,200 guests and it includes our Resort, Destination Spa, a 450-home Golf Course Community, a Market/Gas Station, and a restaurant on Lake Wallenpaupack.

Woodloch now employs 1,200 very dedicated individuals and is the largest employer in Wayne & Pike Counties.

Our business has received many accolades over the years and in 2015 our resort was honored by TripAdvisor as “The #1 Family Resort in America”, and our Destination Spa was chosen by *Travel & Leisure* and *Conde Nast* as “One of The Top 10 Destination Spas in the World”. However, the recognition we are most proud of is being chosen as “The Best Place to Work in PA” by the Great Places to Work Institute.

In addition to my business interest, I am involved in many civic organizations. Most importantly, for today’s testimony, I am serving as Chairman of the Board of the Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau, School Board Director for the Wallenpaupack Area School District for the past 32 years, and Chairman of the Board for The Dime Bank. I believe that my business experience and community involvement qualifies me as a very credible witness for today’s testimony.

For my full resume and biography, please see attached.

## **John S. Kiesendahl**

731 Welcome Lake Rd.  
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(570) 685-8020

### **EDUCATION**

Cornell University, B.S. Hotel Administration, Graduated with Distinction 1969

### **EMPLOYMENT:**

1969-1973	U.S. Naval Officer (Lieutenant)
1973 – present	Purchased business and became President/CEO 1983 Woodloch Pines, Inc., Hawley, PA
1991 – present	President/CEO Woodloch Builders, Hawley, PA
1998 – present	President/CEO Woodloch Hospitality Corporation, Hawley, PA
2010 – present	Managing Partner Woodloch Spa Resort, Hawley, PA
2011 – present	Managing Partner G and W Properties (72 acres adjacent to The Lodge at Woodloch)
2014 – present	Managing Partner Lochgen, LP and Genloch LLC (d/b/a The Market at Woodloch)

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

1985 – present	<i>Chairman of the Board</i> , Dime Bank Board of Directors
2000 – present	<i>Chairman of the Board</i> , Board of Directors of the Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau
1985 – present	<i>Director</i> , Wallenpaupack School Board
2005 – 2014	<i>Board Member</i> , Pike County Hotel Tax Board
Present	Pike County and Northern Pocono Mountain Chambers of Commerce
2005	<i>Co-Chair</i> , Wayne Memorial Hospital Fund Drive

### **RECOGNITION**

*Businessperson of the Year 2012*, Junior Achievement of Northern PA

*Man of the Year 2014*, Northern Pocono Mountain Chamber of Commerce

## **John S. Kiesendahl Bio**

John Kiesendahl has a lifetime dedicated to hospitality. In 1958, John's parents, Mary and Harry Kiesendahl, purchased Woodloch Pines, a small summer boarding house with one year-round employee, no running drinking water, and accommodations for 40 guests. John was 11 years old when he started working in the family business doing dishes, emptying garbage, waiting tables, etc.

Following his passion to continue his career in the hospitality business, John attended Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, graduating with Distinction in 1969. He then served four years as an Officer of the U.S. Navy before returning home to the family business in 1973. In 1981, John purchased the business from his parents. Under his leadership, Woodloch has grown from its humble beginnings to one of the finest family resorts in America. As the largest employer in Wayne and Pike Counties, the resort and its affiliated businesses now employ over 1,200 very dedicated individuals.

In 1990, Woodloch Springs, a 402-home community surrounding a pristine championship 18-hole golf course, came to fruition along with two new companies: Woodloch Builders and Woodloch Real Estate. Both the golf course and community have received national acclaim in Golf Digest, Golf Magazine and Met Golfer. Eight years later in 1998, Woodloch's spirit of hospitality arrived on the shores of Lake Wallenpaupack as The Boathouse Restaurant opened its doors. It is now a staple in the Lake Region and is regarded as the most popular casual dining facility on the lake.

John is also the Managing Partner of The Lodge at Woodloch, a 4-diamond, 58-room luxury destination spa which opened in 2006. The Lodge has received honors as a "World's Best, Top Ten Resort" by Condé Nast Traveler and Travel + Leisure magazines.

Woodloch has been awarded the Pennsylvania Tourism & Lodging Association's "Spirit of Hospitality Award of Excellence for Customer Relations" and "Manager of the Year", among others. Woodloch has also been renowned by Better Homes and Gardens as "One of America's Best Family Resorts," "Best All-Inclusive Resort in America" by About.com 2011 Reader's Choice Awards, and "#1 Family Resort in America" in 2015 by TripAdvisor. However, the award which John is most proud of was being named "The #1 Best Place to Work in Pennsylvania."

In addition to his duties as CEO of Woodloch Pines Inc., John is very committed to the community by serving as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Dime Bank, and as co-chair for the Wayne Memorial Hospital Fund Drive. John has been serving the Wallenpaupack Area School District Board of Education for over 30 years and is Chairman of the Board of the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau. In addition, he has served as a member of the Pike County Tax Board, as well as many other community and philanthropic organizations.