Chairman Carson, Chairman Tucker and members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee

My name is Leslie Otten and I reside in Greenwood Maine. I have been building businesses and creating jobs here since 1972. I Chaired of Governor Baldacci's Wood to Energy Task Force in 2008, which concluded Maine's forests could be successfully harvested renewably, to decrease our carbon footprint and move us closer to energy independence by decreasing our dependence on oil. A similar study was commissioned and lead by Bob Linkletter 2 years ago and came to the same conclusion. I my opinion Maine's standing forests are the equivalent of Saudi Arabia's buried oil; with one notable difference, our forests are resilient and regenerate with sustainable harvesting.

Wood in the form of pellets made form pulp grade timber and wood processing residuals is ideal for producing hot water to heat businesses and residences. With modern technology the next generation of boilers can achieve 95% combustion efficiencies with hot air furnaces right behind at 89%.

I believe the Governor's initiative laid out in LD 1679 and the goals there in are not only achievable but necessary to slow and eventually stop man's contribution to climate change.

A renewable energy portfolio that includes the use of Maine grown wood fiber, refined and consumed here has an important place in any renewable energy plan. Significant impacts for employment and business opportunities, as well as economic savings has the potential to keep hundreds of millions of dollars annually in our economy. In short, the greening of Maine can be cash flow positive. I have attached a short paper on the effects of transitioning 15% of Maine from fossil fuels to renewable wood pellets. Here is what just 1% would meant to us.

Annually … Every 1% of oil that is converted to wood pellets (3,580 households/businesses) does the following:

- Keeps $**6,500,000** in State
- Saves $**6,800,000** on fuel costs
- Increases state tax revenues by $**1,850,000**
- Over a 20 year boiler life = $**303,000,000**
- Cost to achieve this, with an average subsidy of $10,000 = $**35,800,000**
- This results in $**267,200,000** going directly into the Maine economy
- Reduces CO2 by **86,000,000** lbs.

Reference: FutureMetrics White Paper, March 2019