



Testimony of

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and House, In Support of LD 1206, An Act
to Create a Grant Program for Workplace Health and Safety Improvements**

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Dana Doran, and I am the Executive Director of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine. The Professional Logging Contractors of Maine (PLC) is a trade association that represents logging and associated trucking contractors throughout the state of Maine. The PLC was formed in 1995 to give independent contractors a voice in a rapidly changing forest industry.

As of 2021, logging and trucking contractors in Maine employed over 3,000 people directly and were indirectly responsible for the creation of an additional 2,500 jobs. This employment and the investments that contractors make contributed \$582 million to the state's economy. Our membership, which includes 200 contractor members and an additional 120 associate members, employs more than 75% of the individuals who work in this industry and is also responsible for 80% of Maine's annual timber harvest.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership in support of LD 1206, An Act to Create a Grant Program for Workplace Health and Safety Improvements. We are very supportive of this idea and believe that it is something this Committee should take a hard look at.

Logging and trucking driving have been deemed by the US Department of Labor as two of the most dangerous jobs in the United States. Our membership takes this very seriously as accidents can have a direct impact upon their productivity and profitability.

In 2000, the PLC created a partnership with Acadia Insurance to create a culture of safety within our membership. In 2010, we began offering safety trainings to our membership during mud season. This year, we will offer 11 safety trainings to our members throughout the state and over 1,000 of our members employees. Topics for these trainings include: safety culture, ergonomics, shop safety, mental health and roadside relationships with the Maine State Police. Training on these topics will assist our membership in understanding how critical these areas are to individual safety and to the general public.

However, safety and training are expensive, and contractors are finding it harder and harder to keep up with changes required to the workplace to keep their employees safe, and also ensure that their employees have time and resources for training.

The program that Representative O'Connell has proposed in this legislation is a very positive step forward. Programs like this already exist in other states, and I would like to draw your attention to one such program that already exists in Minnesota that could serve as a template for what we do here in Maine. I have attached the statute for this program along with a description of the criteria that must be met to participate. This program is funded by companies that are in the assigned risk pool and cannot obtain insurance through other means. I am not an expert on this program but thought it would be helpful to bring it to the attention of this committee for further evaluation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.