



Testimony of

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**Before the Committee on Transportation regarding LD 1455 – An Act to
Establish the Weighing Point Preclearance Program**

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams and members of the Committee on Transportation, 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 the voice of Maine's logging and trucking industry. The PLC was formed in 1995 to represent independent contractors 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.

The logging industry in Maine was in the midst of a reinvention process until the onset of COVID 19 and the digester explosion at the Jay mill in April 2020. As a result of mill closures, curtailments and inflation created by the response to COVID 19, we are estimating that Maine has lost 30% of its harvesting capacity and the layoff of nearly 1,000 people in harvesting and hauling since 2020. In just four years, the industry has shrunk from an annual economic impact of \$620 million to \$582 million and total jobs have been reduced from 9,000 to 5,500. Our members simply need public policy changes that create efficiencies that will help them save money and increase profitability.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership regarding LD 1455 – An Act to Establish the Weighing Point Preclearance Program. We would like to thank Senator Farrin and Representative Parry for bringing this legislation before the committee to start a conversation.

The PLC is not taking a position on whether this bill should move forward or not in its current form. We will leave it up to this Committee and the Executive Branch to determine how technology should be implemented. With that in mind, we do believe that there are tremendous efficiencies to be gained for the industry and state government by providing an opportunity to utilize weigh station bypass technology.

Our membership operates on razor thin margins. These margins are getting smaller and smaller as we lose markets, see sustained decreases in wood prices and inflation continues to add cost to every product that they use.

Stops at weigh stations, while vital to public safety, take time and are ultimately expensive. Time at weigh stations takes time and money and we should be working together to find efficiencies for this process to provide savings for all parties involved. Logging and trucking contractors only get paid when wood crosses a scale at a mill and any friction in this process lowers profitability.

At the federal level, the Federal Motor Carrier Association mandated the use of Electronic Logging Devices (ELD) for trucks that operate in Interstate Commerce, beginning in December of 2017. At the same time, FMCSA set up a certification process for ELD vendors to ensure that their devices meet all technical specifications detailed in the ELD rule. FMCSA does not pick winners and losers with respect to technology providers and lets the free market compete, as long as their defined specifications are met.

We would like to see the state of Maine create a similar program for the implementation of weigh station bypass technology if the federal government is not going to take the lead. There are several vendors that are currently providing this type of technology and it would be appropriate to create a program, either by statute, rule, or Executive Order that establishes guidelines and requirements for technology providers in this space. This would provide the appropriate technology that will serve the mission of the State Police, the needs of our membership, public safety and will ultimately let the private sector compete for commercial carriers' business.

Weigh station bypass technology is here and will increase in importance as time goes on. It decreases the time trucks spend idling at weigh stations, leads to lower emissions and greater profitability for our membership. This technology will also incentivize our members to comply with state and federal regulations, which ultimately leads to greater public safety.

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