



**Testimony of**

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**Before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology in Opposition to LD 1431 – An Act Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to Adopt Rules Promoting Renewable Energy**

**Thursday, April 20, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, 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 located in Augusta 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 opposition to LD 1431 – An Act Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to Adopt Rules Promoting Renewable Energy. We were not prepared to testify on this bill as the original language did not mention studying biomass energy but feel we must opine on the amended bill language to let the Committee know that we are now opposed to this legislation.

On short notice, we believe the amended bill language is hastily constructed and has flaws that may or may not be intentional. These flaws create inconsistencies in bill construction that appear to make it contradictory. Secondly, this bill makes major changes to the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard, that was just amended in 2019, which no one from the renewable energy industry is requesting.

As an example of the contradictory construction, Section 6 of the legislation does not include biomass as a "naturally regenerative and certified green" resource, yet, Section 7 does. We can't comprehend why the sponsor would not include biomass as naturally regenerative. Perhaps this was a mistake, perhaps it wasn't.

Next, the amended version has a whole new section (Section 11) which calls for a study of the

use of biomass as a substitute for fossil fuels. On face value, that sounds opportunistic, but what we can't comprehend is why this section calls for biomass electric generation, as a substitute for fossil fuels, to be compared to other renewable sources of electric generation as a substitute for fossil fuels. Something doesn't add up here as to what the sponsor is trying to glean from such a study.

If the sponsor would like to study biomass power, we would like to make two suggestions for further inquiry before proposing such wide-ranging legislation. First, she should review the 2016 Study, entitled, "Final Report of the Commission to Study the Economic, Environmental and Energy Benefits of the Maine Biomass Industry," to determine if the answers she is looking for already exist. This study was holistic and would provide background and context that would be helpful to any discussion on the direction of biomass. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we would suggest convening a meeting of stakeholders to determine their needs and what role they could play in the development of legislation related to this industry.

For these reasons, we would like to encourage you to vote Ought Not to Pass on this bill as soon as possible.