

Tony Wood
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LD 2212

Thank you members of the committee for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. My name is Tony Wood, I am the 5th generation of my family to own and operate wood mills in Maine. My father and I own the newest wood pellet manufacturing facility in New England, built in 2018 in Sanford, co-located with a sawmill. We have increased production by double digits every year, purchasing many forestry residuals and sawmill residues and supporting the whole supply chain from landowners, loggers, manufacturers, contractors, and our local community. Our product is very sought after, distributed in all Northeast states and completely sold out every season. We need to continue growing to keep up with demand, but assembling the capital and resources to execute large projects is a big challenge as a small business. Investments by the State of Maine are instrumental in evolving our heritage industry for the future, as well as supporting new technologies and products as they startup and grow. The risks of taking on huge projects or innovative new technologies make it difficult to raise traditional financing, so support from the State is critical to move these important projects forward, and our company is a great example of that. With investments like this program, we are able to make major growth projects happen much faster, creating dozens of new jobs, significant new demand for low grade residuals and fueling the rural economic engine that Maine is built on. It is a challenging time for our loggers and the supply chain from woods to mill, so the timing of these investments is vital. Our forestry community is struggling to adapt to lost markets and a changing logging environment, so one key to their success will be vibrant and diverse markets for all of their products, to encourage sustainable forestry and growth for the next generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.