

1/21/25 ACF



IRVING WOODLANDS, LLC

## Testimony in Support of LD 209

### **Support for Funding Maine Forest Service's response to the Current Budworm outbreak in Maine's Forests.**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Anthony Hourihan and I represent Irving Woodlands. Irving Woodlands owns and manages approximately 1.3 million acres of forest land in the State, and have been landowners in Maine since 1946. We also operate 3 sawmills in Maine, 2 in Aroostook County at Nashville Plantation, and Masardis, and another in Oxford County in Dixfield.

We are submitting testimony in support of LD 209. We feel that managing and maintaining healthy forests in Maine supports thousands of jobs and supports a viable industry in the State. The spruce budworm is an insect we have to deal with in 30 to 40 year cycles, and these insects can have a very detrimental impact on the health of our spruce and fir forests in the State. The last time we had budworm outbreaks in Maine it killed over 7 million acres of forest and cost the industry \$100's of millions of dollars and many jobs.

Much has changed since the last outbreaks, our technology to detect and measure populations is much better, the development of very targeted insecticides that only impact feeding caterpillars is far beyond the wide spectrum sprays used in the 1970's and 80's. The Canadian Province of Quebec has had more than 33 million acres of forests heavily defoliated and killed in the current outbreak, and as these caterpillars mature and turn to moths they have been catching high atmospheric wind currents and spreading to New Brunswick and now Maine.

New Brunswick adopted a new strategy known as early intervention, when they detect a certain threshold of moth eggs per branch on samples they target those areas to kill the caterpillars when they emerge to feed, keeping the populations in check and preventing pandemic levels that we saw in past outbreaks. This has been very successful and New Brunswick has seen little in the way of mortality from budworm in the past 10 years. Maine Forest service, The Maine Budworm Task Force, UMaine and now a Co-operative of landowners and other stakeholders are adapting a similar strategy for the current 225,000 acre outbreak we are seeing in Northern Maine.

Irving Woodlands has been engaged in Early Intervention in the State on small population outbreaks since 2001, we have spent in excess of \$1 million dollars to date with good success. As we continue to have moth flights in to the State we need to insure all impacted landowners have the ability to keep these populations in check to prevent the devastation we saw in the

1980's and currently in Quebec. There has been great discussion on a unified front with a cost sharing between the Federal Government, State Government and larger landowners, and allowing smaller landowners the ability to be protected but not have to pay out of pocket, which is why this request has been put forward by Governor Mills.

Protecting our forests, will protect our industry, our recreational opportunities in the forest of Maine, protect us from large scale forest fires created by dead and dying forests, and keep our forests absorbing carbon.

I would ask that you please vote in favor of the \$2 million proposed by the Governor for the Maine Forest Service to Supplement the \$12 million secured by the Federal Delegation, as well as the millions landowners will be spending.

Please Vote Ought to Pass on this in LD 209

Thank you for your consideration.

Anthony Hourihan  
Irving Woodlands