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DATE: 1/24/2025
TO: Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
FROM: Dr. Adam Daigneault, School of Forest Resources Director & E.L. Giddings Associate Professor of Forest Policy and Economics, adam.daigneault@maine.edu, 207-581-2990
Dr. Jessica Leahy, Henry W. Saunders Distinguished Professor in Forestry, jessica.leahy@maine.edu, 207-581-2834

RE: **Testimony on LD 39, An Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report the Registration or Sale of Their Forest Carbon Credits**

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry:

Our names are Adam Daigneault and Jessica Leahy, and we are professors from the School of Forest Resources at the University of Maine. This public flagship university is Maine's only R1 research university and a national leader in forest education, research and innovation. We are providing written testimony to inform your consideration of LD 39, An Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report the Registration or Sale of Their Forest Carbon Credits. Specifically, we would like to highlight the importance of comprehensive publicly available data to inform research and decision-making in Maine's forestry sector.

As a state with vast forest resources, Maine has the potential to lead in both sustainable forest management and forest-based carbon storage. The lack of publicly available, consistent data on forest carbon projects poses challenges for researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders. Currently, limited information about the scale, scope, location and nature of these projects inhibits the ability to analyze their contributions and impacts to carbon sequestration, forest management practices, and the broader forest economy.

LD 39 represents a step toward addressing this data gap by requiring forest landowners and carbon project developers to report critical information about forest carbon projects. This data, if made accessible while protecting confidential and proprietary details, could support more accurate modeling and analysis of carbon storage trends, available wood supply, and changes to the economic standing of small woodland owners and others in the forest sector. Research using this data can inform state-level forest and climate change policies.

Improved transparency and data availability would also strengthen research partnerships between the University of Maine and state agencies. It could enable better tracking of greenhouse gas emissions reductions, improve the state's ability to track progress towards meeting its 2045 carbon neutrality target, contribute to the understanding of carbon market dynamics, and attract additional public and private investment in forest-based climate solutions.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to consider the importance of creating systems that provide data users like researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders with access to reliable data on forest carbon projects. Doing so will ensure that Maine remains a leader in sustainable forestry and climate innovation while supporting informed decision-making and collaboration across sectors.

Jessica Leahy
Orono / UMaine
LD 39

We are submitting only written testimony and won't be joining in-person or on Zoom. Thank you!