



Testimony of

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
on LD 1252, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Agriculture, Food System
and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Advisory Board**

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Dana Doran, and I am the Executive Director of the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast (PLC). The PLC is a regional non-profit educational organization that represents logging and associated trucking contractors throughout the Northeast, predominately in the state of Maine.

As background, the PLC was created in 1995 to give logging and associated trucking contractors a voice in a rapidly changing forest products 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 over 200 contractor members in the state of Maine and an additional 125 associate members, is responsible for more than 80% of Maine's annual timber harvest.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership in support of LD 1252. We appreciate the sponsor for bringing this bill forward. LD 1252 makes critical changes to the authority and oversight of the Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Advisory Board (Board), of which I am a member. This is a positive step in the right direction to get the program up and running to ensure it is positively impacting Maine's heritage industries.

This bill partially mirrors the adopted amendment for LD 2212 that was brought forward in the 2nd Legislative Session of the 131st Legislature. The Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Fund, which is overseen by the Board, would provide dedicated funding to assist timber harvesting businesses in Maine and is sorely needed. The unpredictability of weather and markets over the last five years has been devastating to the logging industry. As a result, we have seen a steady reduction in capacity and employees and reinvestment has never been at such a low. In conversations with equipment dealers, they are seeing fewer and fewer machines purchased as a result.

As this Committee may be aware, the Governor created a Forest Carbon Taskforce in 2021,

which was charged with investigating impacts of climate and possible solutions for and from Maine's forests. The PLC had a seat on the taskforce and made recommendations that could positively impact Maine's climate and logging contractors. To date, we have yet to see some of the unanimously agreed upon recommendations be implemented. We firmly believe the recommendations could be implemented with the resources in this legislation.

The recommendations include:

- A) Support higher level on-the-ground performance to encourage climate-friendly timber harvesting with verifiable outcomes by promoting voluntary use of third-party certified harvesting companies. Third-party certification provides verification that high standards are being met at the point of harvest, by utilizing independent licensed consulting foresters as verifiers, ultimately providing a verification model for landowners that participate in a carbon program and utilize the services of timber harvesting companies.
- B) Provide cost-share resources for contractors to purchase low ground pressure equipment and implement carbon-enhancing best management practices (e.g., portable bridges, culvert pipes, grass seed, hay, skid trail regrading, road relocation, post-harvest stabilization, corduroy, gravel, silt fencing).

In closing, LD 1252 has an opportunity to improve upon the important work being done by Maine's heritage industries. This legislation could be game changing to encourage cooperation and collaboration between the public and private sectors in the management of the state's resources. We are thankful for your time and service to the people of Maine and encourage you to vote ought to pass as amended.