



**Testimony of Tanbark in Support of LD 506: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Research and Development and Commercialization  
Submitted to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
April 9, 2025**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Committee,

My name is Melissa LaCasse, and I am the co-founder and CEO of Tanbark, a Maine-based company pioneering sustainable packaging solutions made from molded fiber and creating new markets for the pulp and paper industry. I'm writing today in strong support of LD 506, which would authorize a General Fund bond issue to invest in research, development, and commercialization. This investment is essential for Maine's economic future and for ensuring our state leads the way in building sustainable industries grounded in our unique natural and industrial heritage.

Tanbark was founded with the belief that forestry, a Maine legacy industry, is not a relic of the past, but a powerful engine for innovation. We are developing next-generation molded fiber packaging made from Maine wood pulp, offering a sustainable alternative to plastic. Our work is rooted in the knowledge, equipment, and communities that have long defined the pulp and paper industry in this state. But the path from legacy to leadership requires support, especially in the high-risk early stages of research and commercialization.

LD 506 represents an investment in the bridge from tradition to transformation. With this bond, companies like ours will be better equipped to take the crucial next steps: scaling up technologies, refining products, testing new markets, and building the jobs of tomorrow. At Tanbark, we are already creating manufacturing jobs and partnering with Maine-based institutions, and we know that with targeted support, we, and many others like us, can grow faster and have greater impact.

This bond is not just about R&D, it's about R&D that is rooted in Maine values, Maine industries, and Maine potential. We urge you to support LD 506 and help us build a future where Maine leads the country in sustainable manufacturing, innovation, and climate solutions.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maine's economy.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

**Melissa LaCasse**

Co-founder & CEO, Tanbark  
mlacasse@tanbarkmfp.com