

Testimony Regarding Part O of LD 2212, the Supplemental Budget

Provided by Katie Adams on Behalf of ND Paper

February 19, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Katie Adams, and I serve as the Vice President of External Affairs & Sustainability for ND Paper. It's an honor to be here today to share our appreciation for the programs that support our operations, and to explain how eliminating the BETR program in Part O of the proposed supplemental budget would affect our business.

ND Paper owns and operates the Rumford Paper Mill, a fixture of the River Valley since 1901. We employ more than 450 people and work with hundreds of Maine vendors – from loggers to contractors to transportation companies – who rely on a strong manufacturing sector. Together, we contribute significantly to the local economy and to Maine's papermaking tradition.

We are truly grateful for the work the Legislature, Governor Mills, and the Department of Economic and Community Development have done to modernize programs that help manufacturers operate and grow in Maine. That support matters to us.

At the same time, operating a mill of our age requires constant reinvestment. We run equipment that ranges from newly installed to decades old, and because of that mix, we rely on all three major incentive programs – BETR, BETE, and Dirigo. Each plays a different role in our annual budget and long-term capital planning.

BETR reimburses property taxes we've already paid on equipment placed in service between 1995 and 2007. In a century-old mill, equipment from this era is far from obsolete – it's central to our daily operations. In 2024, ND Paper received \$176,843 in BETR reimbursement, and we expect a similar amount this year. For a capital-intensive business operating on thin margins, that support is substantial. BETE applies to equipment placed in service after 2007, reducing the cost of newer investments. Dirigo supports future-focused improvements and training through tax credits. These programs are sometimes described as duplicative, but in practice they support distinct investments.

These programs also operate on different tax bases – BETR and BETE on property taxes and Dirigo on state income taxes. Losing any one program affects a different part of the reinvestment strategy that keeps our mill competitive.

A sudden change to BETR would be particularly difficult. Our 2025 and 2026 budgets were built assuming BETR would continue as it has in past years, and many of our future capital plans rely on those resources. We'd like the program to remain as is, but even a more gradual transition would at least give businesses the stability needed to plan responsibly and avoid disrupting investments already underway.

ND Paper is committed to Maine. We want to continue operating here, hiring here, and investing here. Stability, predictability, and complementary programs like BETR, BETE, and Dirigo make that possible.

Thank you for your time and for your continued support of Maine's manufacturing economy. I'm happy to answer any questions.