



Seven Islands Land Company

Testimony In Opposition to Part O of LD 2212 Elimination of the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) Program

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Hannah Stevens, a resident of Glenburn, and I am testifying on behalf of Seven Islands Land Company, a long-time Maine forest manager with approximately 820,000 acres under management. Our affiliated forest products businesses include a hardwood sawmill and a chip plant in Portage, and we are among the forest products manufacturers that rely on the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program to support continued investment in Maine-based manufacturing.

We strongly oppose Part O of LD 2212, which would significantly reduce BETR reimbursements beginning in tax year 2025 and eliminate the program entirely in 2026.

The proposed elimination of BETR would have immediate and lasting consequences for our Portage operations and for the broader forest products sector. Our sawmill and chip plant are capital-intensive facilities that require ongoing investment in equipment to remain safe, efficient, and competitive. BETR has been a critical component in making those investments feasible in Maine, where markets are increasingly challenging.

The abrupt nature of this proposal is especially concerning. Reducing reimbursements retroactively and then eliminating the program entirely sends a troubling signal to businesses like ours that long-standing tax commitments may not be reliable. For Seven Islands, this uncertainty directly affects how and where we plan future capital investments. When programs like BETR are withdrawn without warning, it undermines confidence in Maine's business climate and discourages reinvestment in existing facilities.

Across the forest products industry, approximately 60 companies would be affected by this change, with millions of dollars in reimbursements eliminated over just two years. For rural manufacturing operations such as ours, those dollars translate directly into jobs, wages, and local economic activity. The proposed cuts are equivalent to the loss of dozens of full-time jobs across the sector, a burden that rural communities are ill-equipped to absorb.

Seven Islands is committed to Maine, to sustainable forestry, and to maintaining jobs in rural areas. The BETR program has helped make that commitment possible by supporting continued reinvestment in equipment and facilities. Eliminating the program will make it more difficult for

companies like ours to modernize operations, remain competitive, and continue contributing to Maine's forest-based economy.

For these reasons, Seven Islands Land Company urges the Committee to reject Part O of LD 2212 and preserve the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.