

March 20, 2023

Representative, Bill Pluecer, Senator Henry Ingwersen and other members of the Agricultural Conservation and Forestry Committee

My name is Greg Foster, I am a Raymond resident and I have been a consulting forester since 1994. I have extensive experience managing forest property for private forest landowner's in southern Maine. I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 993, An act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine.

Upon review of the proposed board members, I find it interesting that of the 21 members, there are no professional foresters, no professional forester organization, or no non-industrial private small forest landowners represented.

It seems that these are very important people that should be included. Consulting foresters who have many clients have extensive experience dealing with issues of concern for private non-industrial forest landowners. These issues include compliance with Tree Growth Taxation, complying with restriction for harvest in a shoreland zone and other timber harvesting restriction. We do timber appraisals, including appraisals following timber trespass. Within our legal limits, we provided boundary line services. We administer timber sales on behalf of our clients to meet the forest landowner's goal. The list goes on. Why would a consulting forester not be included?

As for the purpose of the advisory board, it appears to miss the mark of what Maines forestry community really needs, which is a better business climate. Like many other industries in Maine, our forest community needs quality workers. We need more forest product markets. Most of the hardwood saw and veneer logs in southern Maine are sold to brokers, who resell most of these logs to Canadian Mills. Years ago we had hardwood mills in southern Maine, including Bethel Furniture stock, Saunders Brothers, CB Cummings and others. We recently lost Pixel paper mill, which had a huge negative impact in the forest community.

As for the policy advice for the Maine Forest Service, it seems that they already have a good handle of this. I fear the outcome of policies created by this board will ultimately become legislation, of which have plenty.

A better Maine Business climate keeping and attracting more forest products industries will result in a more prosperous landowner that can better afford to do long term good forestry.

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