



## Seven Islands Land Company

**Testimony in opposition to LD 993  
An Act To Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine  
March 20, 2023**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. I am Hannah Stevens, a resident of Glenburn and Land Use Director of Seven Islands Land Company. I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 993.

Seven Islands Land Company manages approximately 820,000 acres of family-owned commercial timberland in Maine. We hold dual certification on that entire acreage under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) -- third party-certifications that we have held for decades. Additionally, the Pingree family, the owners of the land under our management, granted a conservation easement to the New England Forestry Foundation in 2001, permanently protecting roughly 80% of their land base from development.

Reading through the membership list of the proposed board in LD 993, I can't help but see much similarity between these stakeholders and other collaborations that already exist, such as Keeping Maine's Forests (KMF). KMF membership includes and invites a diverse membership of landowners, forest products industry representatives, recreation interests, tribes, community and economic development organizations, land conservation and wildlife interests, and federal and state government representatives.

KMF is only one such example of diverse stakeholder groups that already exist in Maine and have served as both educational forums and active working groups focusing on the many facets of Maine's forests. Others include the Maine Climate Council, FOR/Maine, Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU), the Maine Spruce Budworm Taskforce, and the Outcome Based Forestry Panel.

Private forest landowners in Maine work closely with the State's biologists and foresters, have partnerships with conservation groups, land trusts, and others interested in the health of both forests and the wildlife and water resources that pass through our lands. The landowners we represent have demonstrated long-standing stewardship and recognize that continued

sustainable management is imperative to ensure that the forest resource is healthy long into the future.

LD 993 calls for a politically appointed board to develop forest policy, while private forest landowners, who own 94% of forest land in the state, would occupy only two of the 21 membership spots described in the bill. In addition to supplying raw material for the state's \$8 billion forest products industry, Maine's large private forest landowners overwhelmingly open their lands to public recreation voluntarily, permitting public access by privilege to millions of acres of working forestland. The private forests of Maine are not being managed out of the view of the public and that management is subject to rules and regulations under the jurisdiction of the professionals at the Maine Forest Service. The oversight of a board of political appointment will not lead to sound forestry or improved forest management.

I urge to you vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 993. Thank you for your time and consideration.