



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

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Cross Insurance
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Farm Credit East
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Huber Resources
INRS
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
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LandVest Inc.
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Stead Timberlands
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Testimony in Support of LD 1048

“An Act Regarding the Authority of Municipalities to Regulate Timber Harvesting”

March 20, 2023

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I'm Patrick Strauch, the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. I am here before you today to testify in support of LD 1048, “An Act Regarding the Authority of Municipalities to Regulate Timber Harvesting.”

As you have heard, LD 1048 originated during the 130th Legislature with LD 1407, “An Act to Provide that a Forestry Operation That Conforms to Accepted Practices May Not be Declared a Nuisance.” This law, which passed through both the Senate and the House under the hammer, directed the Maine Forest Service to convene a group of stakeholders including organizations representing municipalities, family woodland owners, logging contractors, farmers, outdoor recreation and environmental interests and consulting foresters who work in multiple municipalities to review and assess Title 12, section 8869, subsection 8 and the corresponding process relating to a municipal proposal to adopt or amend a timber harvesting ordinance.

Upon completion of this work, which included discussion and input by the public, the findings and recommendations were brought back before this committee, resulting in a committee bill, LD 2102, that died on the table pending reference to this committee. LD 1048 is another attempt to bring the recommendations of this stakeholder group forward.

The resolve that created the stakeholder process was necessary because, since the adoption of the Forest Practices Act in 1999, very few municipalities have followed the outlined process. In fact, only 14 municipalities have sought consultation with the Maine Forest Service regarding the adoption or amendment of local forestry ordinances. Should it pass, this bill would create an avenue for municipalities to come into compliance by June 30, 2027, which we feel this committee should strongly encourage.

LD 1048 is necessary because it would create consistency in forestry definitions and regulations across municipalities in Maine while ensuring that ordinances seeking to regulate timber harvesting operations are based on sound science. It would also create a centralized database of municipal ordinances that apply to forestry operations within the Maine Forest Service, making compliance simpler for loggers and contractors.

For these reasons, the Maine Forest Products Council urges your support of LD 1048. Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.