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Testimony of Tom Doak
Executive Director

Maine Woodland Owners

In Favor of

LD 2063

“An Act to Clarify the Laws Governing Disclosure of Wood Processing Data”

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Tom Doak, I am the Executive Director of Maine Woodland Owners speaking today in favor of LD 2063, “An Act to Clarify the Laws Governing Disclosure of Wood Processing Data.”

This bill authorizes the Maine Forest Service to share certain confidential information it collects from wood processors in Maine with the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station (“USDA”) as long as the Forest Service enters into a confidentiality agreement with that agency. It would limit further disclosure to summary reports that use aggregate data and also provides penalties to ensure that the information shared is used appropriately.

As the former Director of the Forest Service, I know that this bill while simple in concept is incredibly important. The ability of the Maine Forest Service to share wood processing data with its federal counterpart is essential. The confidential data currently collected from wood processors by the Maine Forest Service includes volumes, species, types of wood products the county of origin, and any personally identifiable information about forest products suppliers. The sharing of this wood processing data will not only reduce the burden on wood processors in Maine to respond to various surveys (in addition to complying with other reporting requirements), but it will allow Maine data to be used in federal reports where it has long been missing.

For these reasons, we support LD 2063 and urge this Committee’s favorable consideration.