



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Support to LD 262

“An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Workforce”

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

A & A Brochu Logging
American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Land, LLC
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
INRS
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
Kennebec Lumber
LandVest Inc.
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
St. Croix Tissue
St. Croix Chipping
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser
Woodland Pulp

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. I’m Patrick Strauch of Exeter, Maine. I’m here testifying today as the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. The Council doesn’t come before this committee often, so let me take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about us. The Maine Forest Products Council is an organization representing more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry from the stump to the mill. Our members include paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors and large landowners. Our membership also includes banks and insurance companies. We represent anyone with an interest in promoting a robust and healthy forest products industry.

I am here today to testify in support of LD 262, “An Act to Strengthen Maine’s Workforce” as amended by the sponsor, Representative Roberts.

For the last seven years, the Maine Forest Products Council has worked collaboratively with the Maine Development Foundation on a unique cross-sector collaboration called the Forest Opportunity Roadmap, also known as FOR/Maine. This project brings together industry, communities, government, institutions of higher education and non-profits to help Maine strategically adapt and capitalize on changing markets to maintain our leading role in the global forest economy.

Since its inception seven years ago, the Council has helped lead this effort, which is staffed by the Maine Development Foundation. This ongoing effort has been tremendously successful, and that is in part thanks to the good, credible, non-partisan work of the Maine Development Foundation. The Maine Development Foundation has been a great organization to partner with.

LD 262, as amended, restores match funding from the central fund for private contributions to MDF, up to \$250,000 per year, to support their work in the areas of economic, workforce and community development initiatives with a focus on distressed communities and industries. These funds, which would help MDF leverage up to \$500,000 per year, would allow the organization to continue its great work, which of a great benefit to our economy and state.

For these reasons, please vote **‘Ought to pass’** on LD 262 as amended. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.