



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

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## Testimony in Support of LD 39

### **“An Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report their Participation in a Forest Carbon Project”**

January 28, 2025

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and members of the ACF Committee. My name is Patrick Strauch. I live in Exeter, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. Our membership includes loggers and truckers, commercial landowners and manufacturing forest sectors. We support the Department's intent to use LD 39, as amended, to monitor a developing carbon offset market and to report on general trends similar to the role the Annual Wood Utilization report plays in guiding forest policy discussions.

The carbon offset market is emerging as an important component to forest landowner portfolios to help strengthen the long-term investment in land required for growing trees. Overall, Maine forests and wood products are estimated to be acting as a net sink of 16.4 MMTCO<sub>2</sub> e/yr between 2017 and 2021, offsetting about 101% of Maine's total gross GHG emissions while supporting an \$8.1 billion forest products industry.<sup>1</sup>

The forest carbon offset market is based on the fact that trees store carbon on an annual basis simply by growing. Land managers routinely measure and track harvest levels to reach an annual allowable harvest goal for various sections of their property. Carbon offset markets enable a landowner to sell a portion of their tree growth at various levels of the stand development (e.g. rapidly growing saplings sequestering carbon or more mature stands that are storing carbon.)

MFPC closely watches public data on current carbon management projects, and they range from the assignment of a portion of land to a 20-year growth period consistent with a management plan, to longer term carbon sales that are occurring on properties owned by ENGOs. Tracking the general trends of these transactions is important for policy discussions and consistent with other reporting requirements to the Maine Forest Service.

MFPC's position statement on carbon is that while Maine landowners have a right to sell carbon, the extent to which these sales limit or reduce timber harvesting activities has an impact on the entire forest economy – loggers, truckers, mills and the communities that host them. Programs that limit or decrease timber harvesting activities, while potentially beneficial for individual landowners, may have a negative impact on the broader economy of rural Maine.

That said, we do believe carbon offset projects can be constructed in a way that creates timber stand improvements and maintains a steady supply of wood to Maine mills. In Maine, we've demonstrated that our current harvesting practices are sequestering and storing enough carbon to largely offset our emissions.

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<sup>1</sup> Maine Climate Council Technical Committee Report 2024.

Internationally, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change believes:

*“In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber, or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit.”*

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of this legislation, as amended, and would be glad to answer any questions you may have.