



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

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## Testimony in Support of LD 121

### **An Act to Include Brush and Yard Debris in the Definition of “Litter”**

Tuesday, February 3, 2025  
Krysta West, Deputy Director

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Krysta West. I am from Readfield, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council.

Before I get into the specifics of the bill, I will take a moment to introduce our group to this committee since it is not one that we often have the opportunity to address. For 65 years, the Maine Forest Products Council has served as the voice of Maine's forest economy, representing more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry. Our members include pulp and paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors, foresters, loggers, truckers, commercial landowners and more.

We are here today to support LD 121, and we would like to thank Senator Black for bringing this bill forward at our request. This, I can only imagine, is one of the more straightforward bills that you will consider this session. In talking with our commercial landowners, it has come to light that public dumping of brush and yard debris has become an issue that is, unfortunately, becoming more common. In addition to costing time for log landings to be cleared before they can be used for their intended purpose, this practice is also resulting in the spread of invasive species that are then the landowner's responsibility to address. Under current law, this form of dumping is not technically illegal, leaving game wardens and forest rangers very little recourse to address the issue. By adding brush and yard debris to the definition of litter, they will have a necessary tool to curb this behavior moving forward.

With about 94% of Maine held in private ownership, the vast majority of outdoor recreation occurs on private lands. That access, which is largely provided at no cost to the public, comes at a cost to private landowners. Illegal dumping and litter are a concern for landowners of all sizes. Unfortunately, this behavior is a leading cause of private land being posted to the public, which is why the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife hosts a landowner appreciation day each year where game wardens and volunteers devote a day to cleaning up litter on private lands. Each year since 2013<sup>1</sup>, volunteers and wardens have picked up between 36,000 to more than 200,000 pounds of trash including between 1,000-2,000 tires. While the Department's continued efforts to clean up private lands and to raise public awareness of this issue is much appreciated, LD 121 would provide wardens and rangers with the necessary recourse to hold violators accountable and preserve access.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. The Maine Forest Products Council urges the committee to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 121. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sunjournal.com/2024/09/09/landowner-appreciation-day-set-for-sept-15/>