



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Jennifer Poirier introducing*

**L.D. 417, " An Act Regarding the Confidentiality of Certain Records Belonging to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Related to the Bureau of Forestry "**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture*

February 27, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Jennifer Poirier and I represent House District 70, which is the great community of Skowhegan. I am here to present LD 417, "An Act Regarding the Confidentiality of Certain Records Belonging to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Related to the Bureau of Forestry".

Timber harvesting is a critical industry in Maine, contributing significantly to our state's economy and rural communities. My district, for example, relies heavily on the forest products industry and I am hopeful the industry will remain profitable for our future generations. Forest management and the regulations thereto require sensitive information be kept confidential from the public to protect the integrity of all parties. For example, stumpage pricing, wood processing reports, silviculture reports, landowner harvest plan and tax information, production information has been kept confidential as required in statute. However, it has been brought to my attention that not everyone in the forest products industry is covered by the same confidentiality and statutory protection.

This bill seeks to correct two separate issues with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry regarding confidentiality that are not specified in statute:

1. In the event of an investigation of a violation of the Forest Practices Act regarding a logging contractor, the contractor's information must remain confidential until the conclusion of the investigation. Simply put, due process rights, which are imbedded in our Constitution, should be afforded to contractors. The contractor will remain innocent until proven guilty and not have their information shared with outside groups.
2. If a logging contractor and/or their employees are provided with a service by the Maine Forest Service or attend something as simple as a training, their information will not be shared publicly online, in a database.

The disclosure of this information could inadvertently put a contractor's livelihood at risk or be used as leverage against them by outside entities. With that being said, there are people here today or online that can share their experiences of how the absence of confidentiality has impacted their business.

I respectfully ask for your support for LD 417 to ensure that Maine's loggers are given the same confidentiality and due process protections that are afforded to other members of the forest products industry in statute currently.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, however, others in the room will be able to answer them with more clarity.

Jennifer Poirier  
State Representative