



**Testimony of Eliza Townsend
In opposition to LD 261
An Act Regarding the Authority of Municipalities to Regulate Timber Harvesting
February 11, 2025**

Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, I am Eliza Townsend. I live in Leeds and serve as Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit representing 90,000 members from Maine to Virginia. Our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and own 114,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County managed for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education. We pay property taxes on all of our land.

AMC opposes LD 261. We have no objection to the idea that municipal ordinances should adopt definitions for forestry terms consistent with those used by the Maine Forest Service.

The existing process for adoption of local ordinances is very prescriptive. Retroactively applying the process to ordinances adopted as long ago as 35 years is extreme. Under this bill, a municipality that has had a timber harvesting ordinance in place since September 1, 1990 would have to do the following by June, 2029:

- Consult a licensed professional forester on the ordinance;
- Meet with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, explaining the municipality's goals;
- Hold a public hearing 45 days before a vote on the ordinance, having mailed notice of the hearing to all landowners in the municipality 14 days in advance;
- Prepare and file with the municipal clerk a written certificate documenting to whom the notice was mailed, their addresses, by whom the notice was mailed and from what location it was mailed;
- Notify the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry of the hearing and provide a copy of the ordinance at least 30 days before the hearing;
- Provide the department the opportunity to present and discuss at the hearing any articles, treatises, or similar materials;
- Submit the ordinance to the municipality's legislative body.

The (existing) ordinance can only be (re)adopted after certification by the Maine Forest Service that all of the above steps were taken, and it must be pursuant to and consistent with the municipality's comprehensive plan.



**APPALACHIAN
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For these steps and criteria to apply to local ordinances that have been in place since George H.W. Bush was President, John McKernan was Governor of Maine, *Dances With Wolves* won best picture, *Cheers* was the most popular television show, and New Kids on the Block and George Michael were on the airwaves is extreme.

The process for a municipality to adopt a timber harvesting ordinance going forward is laid out in existing law. Therefore, there is no need for this bill. We ask you to vote Ought Not to Pass.