

# MITCHELL TARDY JACKSON

Testimony of Jim Mitchell on behalf of Irving Woodlands

In opposition to

LD 870, An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission

March 20, 2025

Sen. Talbot Ross, Rep. Pluecker and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am Jim Mitchell. I live in Waterville and I am here today on behalf of Irving Woodlands. Irving owns approximately 1.3 million acres of forestland in Northern Maine and operates 3 sawmills in Maine: 2 in Aroostook County at Nashville Plantation, and Masardis, and another in Oxford County in Dixfield. The company also operates 2 rail lines, The Maine Northern and the Eastern Maine Railroad. The company employs approximately 575 Mainers and contracts with nearly 200 loggers and truckers. In addition, Irving has planted nearly 90 million trees in Maine and is on track to set a record of 5 million seedlings planted in 2025.

The unorganized territories of Maine are unique and special places; we appreciate and value initiatives to protect and preserve “remote” Maine because these areas are home to some of the true gems of the State. At the same time, these geographic locations are home to people who — like all Mainers — must have economic opportunities. To support and encourage Maine’s natural resource based industry and protect the environment is not only right, it is necessary. And, striking the right balance between protecting places and promoting economic opportunity is just as necessary.

As an organization, Irving takes pride in our careful stewardship of the land and in our many environmental initiatives. So, we appreciate the sponsor’s objectives to ensure good science is applied to the decision-making of the Land Use Planning Commission by requiring members appointed by the Governor to have “technical or scientific backgrounds in one or more of the areas of forestry, land use planning, conservation, fisheries, wildlife, outdoor recreation and natural resources-related businesses.” But we believe this “professionalization” of the membership loses sight of the higher calling of planning boards comprised of citizens: to find the public interest by balancing the many needs and wants of all interests. Expert advisors in various fields are critical to finding the public interest but citizens imbued with the culture and nature of these areas and their neighbors’ needs are best suited to make the *decisions* on the planning objectives and their implementation.

While developing a project in Northern Maine, Irving personnel were consistently impressed with the professionalism of the LUPC’s staff. The expertise of the staff ensures that applicants are questioned thoroughly and plans scrutinized rigorously. While we believe the LUPC would be improved by adding more technical staff — they are stretched thin — we are

convinced the Commission members themselves should have the attributes that you yourselves have as citizen legislators: understanding the needs of the citizens you represent; considering information thoroughly; and rendering decisions carefully. The key question to answer is will adding more members who are not residents of the counties where the majority of unorganized territories exist diminish the Commission's understanding of the needs of the citizens in the unorganized territories? We think it will and that's why we oppose LD 870.

Thank you for considering my testimony and I would be pleased to try to answer any questions you may have.



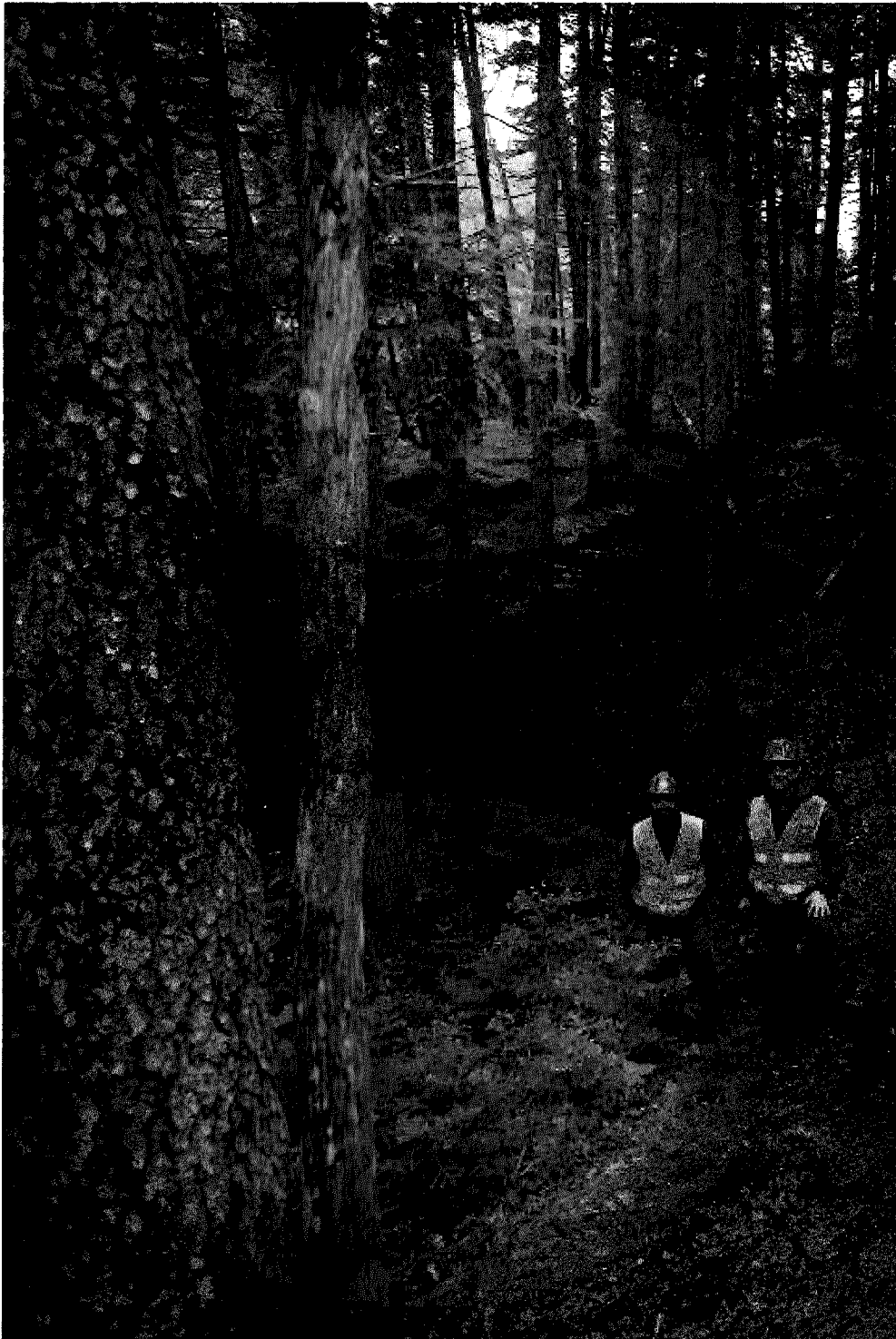
# **Maine Operations – Year End 2023**

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**Irving Woodlands, LLC; Irving Forest Products; Cavendish Farms**

<b>Direct Employees</b>	<b>574</b>
<b>Direct Payroll (Annual)</b>	<b>\$43 Million</b>
<b>Local Purchases (Annual)</b>	<b>\$157 Million</b>
<b>Capital Investments (2013-2023)</b>	<b>\$185 Million</b>





# Maine Woodlands Update

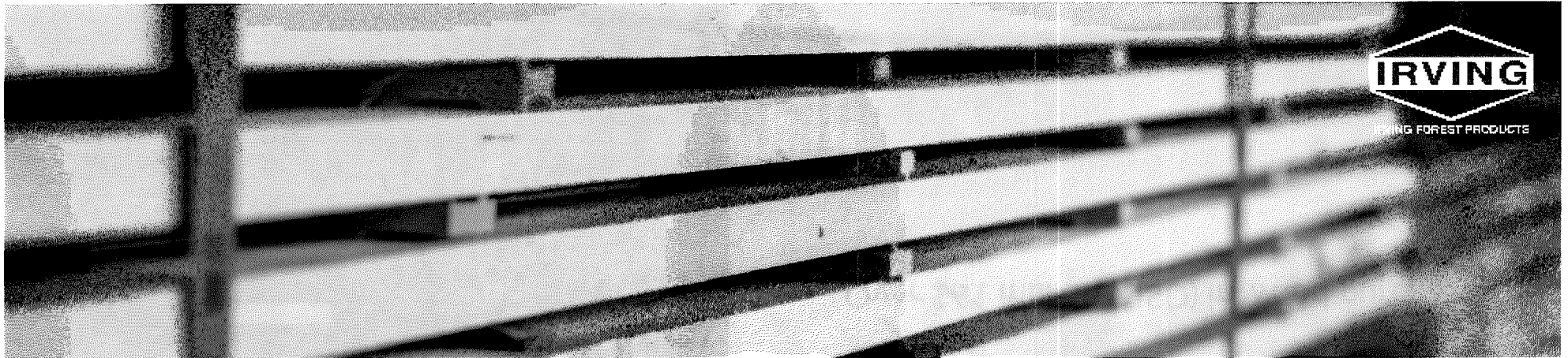
## Investing in the Future

- 87 million trees planted in Maine.
- Over 98,000 acres of young forest have been pre-commercially thinned in Maine.
- \$5 million (USD) spending in silviculture in 2025.
  - 2025 will be a record tree planting year – 5 million seedlings.
  - Over 6,000 acres of young forest are being manually thinned.
- Plan to increase tree planting to 9 million seedlings per year.



# Maine Woodlands Update

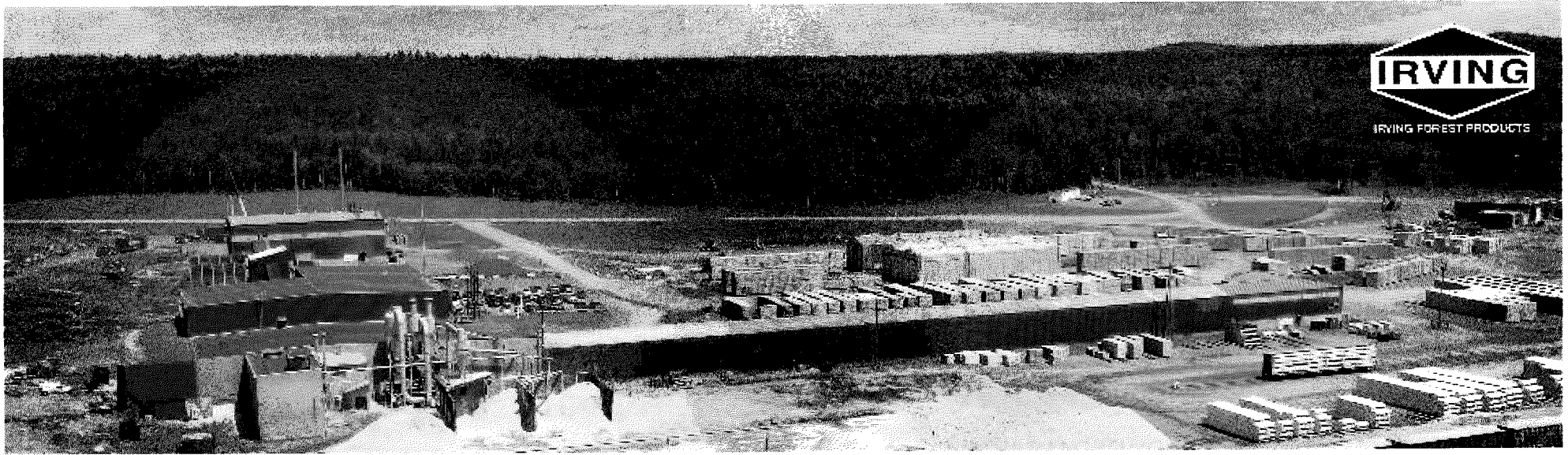
- 74 full time employees (hourly and salaried).
- Roughly 200 logging and trucking contractors & operators.
- Over \$39 million (USD) in payments to our harvesting and trucking contractors.
- Over \$7 million (USD) in local purchases (excluding wood purchases).
- Over \$61 million (USD) in wood purchases.



## Maine Sawmills

- Annual payroll = **\$25+ million**
- Annual local purchases (excluding logs) = **\$27+ million**
- 2023 Capital Investments = **\$2.8 million**



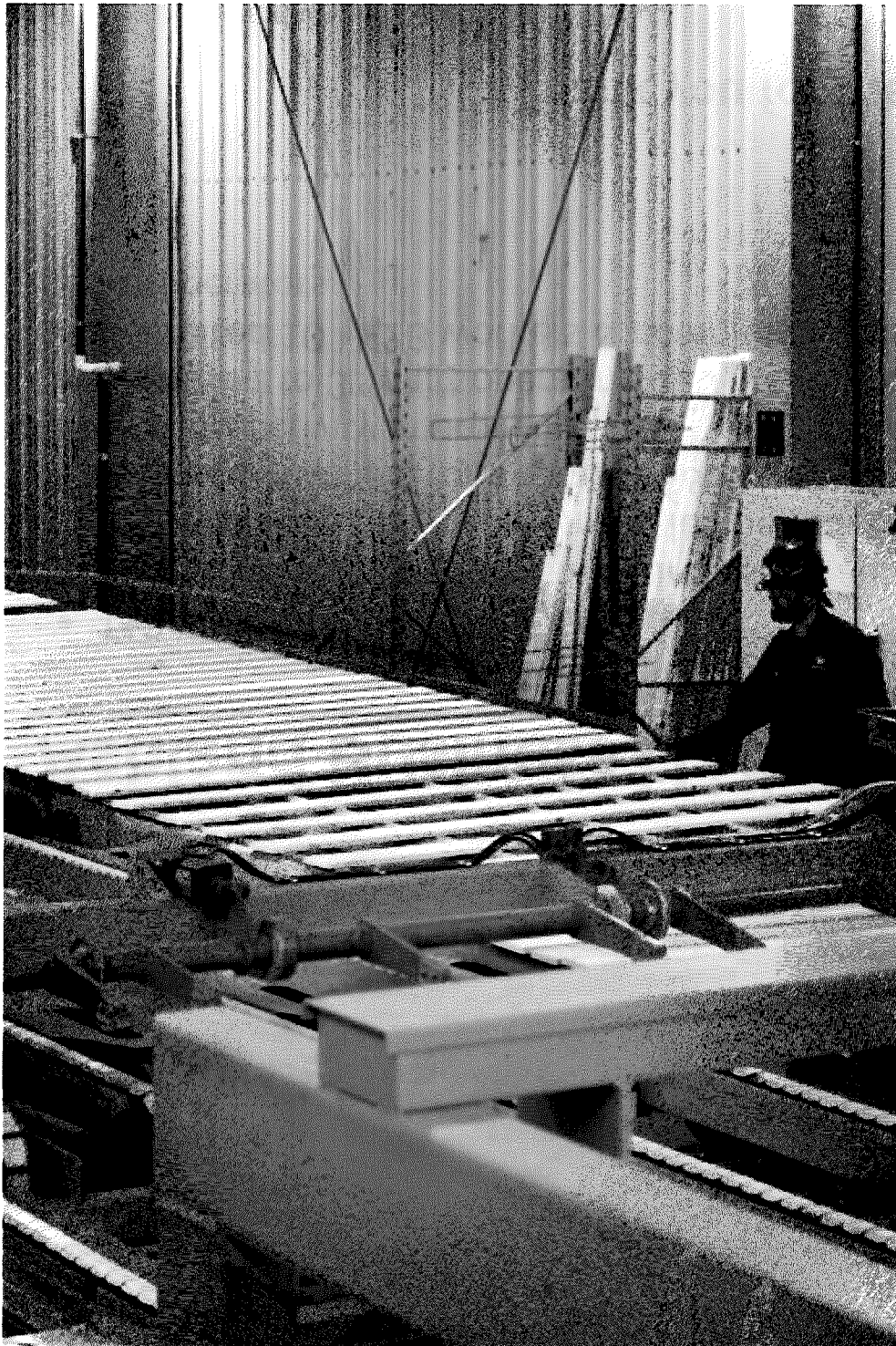


## Ashland Business Update

- 112 employees.
- Further investments with the purchase of automatic sticker placers and an automatic lumber bundle strapping machine for a total of \$600,000 USD.
  - Productivity Improvement
- Increased to 3<sup>rd</sup> shift operating 120 hrs/week.
- Recruited 10 H-2B workers & completed training for operators.



**Thank you for the ongoing support!**



# Dixfield

## Business Update

- 230 employees.
- Milestone production of 100 MMFBM – an 8% increase from 2023 and resulted in purchasing 800 more truckloads of logs.
- Investing in shrink wrap technology – the first in the Northeast for wrapping lumber.
  - Total investment of \$1.4M USD
- Continued growing the business with Home Depot, now supplier for the entire Eastern Seaboard.
- Plan on investing \$0.8M in Housing Development/

**Thank you for the ongoing support!**





# Masardis Business Acquisition

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- 92 employees.
- Production forecasted to improve by 40% over 2024, to 70 Mfbm or an additional 2500 truck loads of Maine sourced round wood.
- We will be seeking determination as a Pine Tree Development Zone to assist with the addition of new employees and an increase in mill production.