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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 798

*An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Mass Timber Manufacturing*

April 9, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee (AFA), I am Patty Cormier, the Director of the Bureau of Forestry. I am speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) as neither for nor against LD 798, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Mass Timber Manufacturing*.

Maine's forestry and forest products sector industry contributes over \$8 billion annually to the state and supports more than 13,000 jobs. Maine is the most forested state in the nation, with nearly 89% of its land covered in forests. The forest sector extends throughout every corner of the state, supporting woodland owners, loggers, foresters, and wood processors. An even broader impact is felt in the many rural communities of Maine, where forests and the businesses they support are the mainstay of local economies. As a heritage industry, forests and forest products have supported generations of Maine people and still touch the lives of virtually everyone in our state today.

Maine's forest sector is vibrant and innovative and has been adapting to global changes reflecting increasing demand for wood while new product classes have emerged. Mass timber is one such class of products, comprising several types of engineered wood timbers and panels that are increasingly used in residential and commercial construction. Mass timber construction brings with it all the benefits of a renewable, energy-efficient, high-performing, and aesthetically pleasing material. It has undergone significant testing and development at the University of Maine and elsewhere, and in the past decade, has been used in an increasing number of multi-unit residential and institutional structures throughout the United States and Europe, as well as here in Maine.

This bill would direct substantial investment to support the development of mass timber manufacturing facilities in Maine. Maine's forest economy has been resilient in the face of

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numerous challenges, particularly in the last five years, but further innovation is needed to help sustain the industry. Mass timber manufacturing facilities would use Maine wood from Maine woodlands, generating additional employment all along the wood supply chain in the rural communities that could most benefit from economic revitalization. The important investments in this bill would signal strong support for bringing this emerging technology to Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this important initiative. I'd be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.