

Testimony by James Robbins in support of LD 798- An act to  
authorize a General Fund Bond issue to fund Mass Timber  
Manufacturing

Testimony to be given on April 9, 10 am, State House Room 228

My name is James Robbins from Searsmont, Maine. I am a former owner and president of Robbins Lumber Company. I am now retired. Robbins owns two white pine sawmills- one in Searsmont and one in East Baldwin. We also own a lumber painting plant and an 8.5-megawatt biomass power plant. We employ approximately 200 men and women here in Maine.

I am here today to ask you to please support this bond issue. With the demise of many of our paper mills, we need a major manufacturer of wood products here in Maine to replace the jobs and wages lost with the shutting down of those mills. We need a cross laminated timber plant, in particular, to locate here. There is a growing demand for CLT in this country and there are no producers of this product located in the eastern part of the United States. Most of it is produced in Canada, Europe or the Pacific Northwest. There is one plant in Michigan. The products produced in Canada and Europe are going to be much more expensive because of tariffs and all of the producers are located a long way from the East coast - which adds tremendously to the cost for transportation. The east coast market is right in our back yard and so provides a tremendous opportunity for a CLT plant located in Maine.

CLT's are a great building product to use because they are made from wood which is a renewable resource. The carbon

footprint of using CLT's is much less than using steel or concrete. Construction is much faster, and the lumber used to produce them is produced in large quantities right here in Maine using our plentiful, renewable spruce and fir.

Maine is a tough place to start a new business due to some of the highest taxes and electrical rates in the United States. Therefore, we need an incentive to attract new businesses here. Business goes where it is wanted. This proposed \$50 million bond issue will send a strong message to any perspective mass timber companies that they are wanted here.

I know there are mass timber companies that are interested in locating here. Our plentiful timber resource combined with a \$50 million bond issue might be enough to tip the scales in our favor and convince them to come to Maine.

Please vote in the affirmative to support this bond issue.

Thank you.

James Robbins