



**Maine Labor Climate Council**

**Testimony in Support of LD 798**

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

**Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs**

**Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Appropriations & Financial Affairs Committee. My name is Chace Jackson and I am a partner at the Resurgam Group, where we are proud to represent the Maine Labor Climate Council (MLCC). MLCC is an organization of 20 unions dedicated to fighting income inequality and climate change for the benefit of working Mainers.

I am before you today to offer testimony in support of LD 798, which proposes a \$50,000,000 bond to finance the design and construction or the retrofitting of a manufacturing facility for mass timber products, such as cross-laminated timber. We would like to thank Rep. Sam Zager for bringing this concept forward and beginning a conversation that we hope the state of Maine will be very engaged in in the coming years.

Mass timber refers to a broad category of construction and building materials that layer and bond wood components to create strong, durable, and more sustainable dimensional products. In addition to mass timber’s carbon storing capacity and its potential to avoid the energy and cost-intensive implications of building strictly with traditional materials like steel, products like cross-laminated timber help make a wider range of wood-based dimensional lumber more broadly available.

Mass timber construction projects have been growing in prevalence across the United States and beyond, with exponential growth projected across the industry over the next decade. Opportunities for growth may in fact be understated with steel procurement by US firms becoming more challenging in a tariff-rich environment. While we do not know precisely what the future holds for construction and building material costs, we can safely

assume that Maine's access to wood fiber means it will play an increasingly large role in sourcing material for this growing industry. We believe that Maine should take an active role in steering those value-added products to be manufactured here.

Projects designed for mass timber construction are becoming more prevalent in the United States, and especially so in East Coast urban areas where it is seen as an attractive alternative to energy-intensive materials with a carbon negative implications like steel. Building with wood products, especially large projects anticipated to have multi-decade lifespans, effectively "sinks" carbon into long-term storage. That's why states and local governments with carbon reduction and climate goals are increasingly looking toward these products as an exciting option as they consider the construction aspects of their climate plans.

Maine's relative proximity to these markets dovetails nicely with its access to wood fiber, which is well known to be unparalleled east of the Mississippi. We should creatively look to the future and consider a thoughtful approach to sourcing these building materials that also leads to the manufacture of value-added products here in Maine. Recognizing we have neighbors who will create demand, now is our time to plan the growth of an industry that will fully realize its potential and best contemplate the benefits it should provide to Mainers – most of all, those doing the work.

Our rich logging history has contributed dimensional products around the world, and in some corners of the state there is still a value-added product created with that fiber at paper mills and other facilities. However, Maine should make every effort to ensure the economic imbalances that have permeated these industries and were most often borne by workers do not carry over into mass timber. LD 798's focus on creating value-added products here in Maine is an important and thoughtful step in that direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.