



Testimony of

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
on LD 1525, An Act to Promote Firewood Banks in Maine**

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Dana Doran, and I am the Executive Director of the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast (PLC). The PLC is a regional non-profit educational organization that educates the public on professional logging and trucking issues throughout the Northeast, predominately in the state of Maine.

As background, the PLC was created in 1995 to give logging and associated trucking contractors a voice in a rapidly changing forest products industry. As of 2021, logging and trucking contractors in Maine employed over 3,000 people directly and were indirectly responsible for the creation of an additional 2,500 jobs. This employment and the investments that contractors make contributed \$582 million to the state's economy. Our membership, which includes over 220 contractor members in the state of Maine and an additional 125 associate members, is responsible for more than 80% of Maine's annual timber harvest.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of our members in support of LD 1525, An Act to Promote Firewood Banks in Maine. We appreciate Representative Ray for introducing this legislation, which highlights the important role that wood heat plays in Maine's economy. Wood has consistently proven to be a reliable and locally sourced heating option, especially in a state like ours.

LD 1525 promotes the success of local firewood banks in rural communities by directing the Bureau to develop and distribute informational resources about effective wood bank operations. Encouraging the use of wood banks has multiple benefits. By increasing access to affordable heat it supports our neighbors in need and local communities in rural Maine. It also inspires philanthropic donations which is the very fabric of this state. Many of our contractor members already donate to local wood banks as a way to give back and this bill creates a framework to support those efforts.

Maine is colder, more rural and unfortunately has some of the poorest counties in the country. It also has a long-standing tradition of using wood as a primary heat source. During the winter

months, many residents face difficulty heating their homes and must turn to fuel assistance programs. Instead of having to apply through a government program that is subject to the whim and mercy of Congress each year to receive heating assistance, the wood banks offer an alternative that is practical, sustainable, and a glowing example of Maine's heritage and community centric philanthropy.

Wood is a renewable natural resource that is readily available in our state. The dollars spent on it remain in the local economy, supporting Maine jobs and communities rather than flowing out of state or overseas. Responsible local harvesting of this resource also reduces our reliance on fossil fuels and contributes to climate resilience.

At a time when there is increasing pressure to electrify everything and invest heavily in alternative energy sources, LD 1525 offers a cost-effective solution inspired by tradition and community. It recognizes the value of wood heat in Maine and the unique role firewood banks can play in meeting that need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1525 and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.