



Testimony of

**DANA A. DORAN
Executive Director**

Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
on LD 1529, An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources
Statewide**

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 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 providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership in opposition to LD 1529, An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide. The bill before you aims to enhance and encourage the preservation of late-successional forests and old-growth forests in Maine. While on face value, this appears to be a noble endeavor, what is described in Section 1-4 and 6 as conservation projects are in fact prescriptive preservation measures that will use taxpayer funds to take working forestland out of production and prohibit timber harvesting in the future. In the land of Paul Bunyan with a 250-year history of forest management, we simply cannot support these sections of the bill. If the committee chooses to amend the bill and remove these sections, we will remove our opposition.

As a member of the Maine Climate Council's Natural and Working Lands Workgroup in 2020 and again in 2024 and as a member of the Governor's Forest Carbon Task Force in 2021, we certainly made recommendations in our reports (attached) which would increase investment in forestland conservation, predominately through the Land for Maine's Future program. However, you will note that not once in our deliberations or recommendations, did we ever

support taking forestland out of production and prohibiting timber harvesting. We were very deliberate and thoughtful to ensure forests not only stay forests, but we use them to grow higher quality wood and expand markets simultaneously.

It is a major concern to us that this legislation would attempt to gerrymander the Land For Maine's Future program, which is taxpayer funded, to preserve forestland and take it out of production.

As forests get older, they reach a point where it is beneficial to cut the older trees leaving room for younger forest growth to regenerate in their place. Trees in Maine will not live for 1,000 years and they will die, rot on the forest floor, produce methane and limit regeneration. For managed forests, it has been proven that regenerative growth will capture more carbon in the long run. Even if a mature tree is harvested, if used in the right application, the carbon is stored permanently in long lasting forest products, even after being harvested.

In the most recent Natural and Working Lands Work Group's final report to the Maine Climate Council from 2024 (attached), there is no mention of preservation and using the Land for Maine's Future Program to achieve such a goal. This report was unanimously supported by a group that consisted of state officials, environmental organizations, landowners, loggers, mills and wildlife officials. Recommendation 1 of the work group's final report states:

Focus land protection efforts in areas with high biodiversity value, high carbon storage sequestration, cultural and economic importance, and/or which offer opportunities to improve public access equitably. Through voluntary, focused purchases of land and conservation easements, increase of the area of conserved lands in Maine by at least 1.5 million acres by December 2030 with the following target in mind:

Sustain ecosystem services and lands needed for carbon storage and sequestration and natural resource-based industries by securing significant and well-distributed working forest conservation, including productive lands for storage and sequestration and durable wood product production and new fee and easement conservation within source drinking water watersheds to ensure water quality without additional water treatment measures.

As you should note in this recommendation, but what is pervasive throughout all three reports over the last five years, the emphasis is upon conservation and there is not one mention of preservation. All stakeholders recognized that the forests can be conserved, but managed and kept in production for the benefit of all.

Protecting Maine's environment is a priority for everyone in the state and it must be done in collaboration with the people who live on and care for the land every day. Maine can achieve conservation goals while also maintaining economic resilience. This bill would take 250 years of careful management and essentially throw it out the window in favor of doing nothing as a management plan for the future.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully urge you to vote ought not to pass on this bill as soon as possible.