



Russell Black  
Senator, District 5

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**LD 1868 “An Act to Advance a Clean Energy Economy by Updating  
Renewable and Clean Resource Procurement Laws”  
Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology  
May 6, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

I am Senator Russell Black and I represent Senate District 5, which includes towns in Franklin, Kennebec and Somerset County.

I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1868. This bill is critically important for rural Maine, and especially for the working people of Franklin County. Our region depends on the forest products industry. It supports logging crews, truckers, mill workers, and countless small businesses. These jobs are the backbone of our local economy.

Facilities like the biomass plant in Stratton are a vital part of that system. They take wood waste such as mill residues, slash, and low-grade wood and turn it into renewable energy. Without that outlet, there is nowhere for these materials to go. Costs rise for landowners and loggers, operations become unviable, and the ripple effect hits our entire community.

We cannot afford to lose a single link in the forest economy chain. If Stratton shuts down or scales back because it cannot compete on energy pricing, it will have a direct impact on jobs in Franklin County. It means fewer logging crews, idle trucks, and forestlands left unmanaged. Also, when working forests become unaffordable, landowners start to post them.

LD 1868 gives the Public Utilities Commission the authority to initiate competitive contracts that can provide long-term stability for renewable energy producers like Stratton. It is a smart policy that supports our energy goals while protecting rural jobs.

Let us do what is right for Franklin County and for Maine’s forest economy. I respectfully urge you to support LD 1868.

Thank you for your time.