



## **Testimony of**

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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs on  
LD 2094, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Maine's  
Agricultural and Forestry Sectors**

**Tuesday, January 20, 2026**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, 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 educational non-profit organization that represents logging and associated trucking contractors 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 support of LD 2094, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Maine's Agricultural and Forestry Sectors. This bond initiative would provide a first of its kind investment in two of Maine's oldest heritage industries, which have their origins before statehood.

The PLC has been advocating for more funding for logging and forest truckers with the Mills Administration for the last seven years. We are hopeful that the investment in this bond will be the culmination of this work. However, we also believe strongly that the bill before you needs to be amended to provide greater equity and accountability before moving forward.

First, you will note in the current bill that the \$40 million recommended for funding is divided as follows: 70% for agriculture and 30% for forestry. Forestry will only receive \$12 million compared to the \$28 million for agriculture.

While we don't dispute the importance of each sector, forestry in Maine is an \$8.3 billion industry and agriculture is a \$3.6 billion industry. Thus, the forest economy is 2.3 times bigger

than agriculture. We would request that the bond bill before you be amended to provide greater equity, either through a 50/50 split or by increasing the amount in the bond to \$50 million and dedicating at least \$25 million to each industry.

Our vote would be to increase the total bond amount to \$50 million, with the additional \$10 million dedicated to a low-interest revolving loan program for logging companies, established by LD 1733 in the first session of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature. This surgical and sustainable pathway would provide a lifeline for logging companies to invest in modern, environmentally sensitive equipment that protects Maine's forests while keeping loggers safe. In doing so, this would level out the funding between the two industries but also provide a vital investment to an industry that is in need of help. This investment isn't just about equipment, it's about preserving one of Maine's heritage industries, protecting jobs in the logging industry, and ensuring that Maine's working forests remain productive in preparation for future markets.

Logging contractors operate in a capital-intensive industry, relying heavily on very expensive equipment to operate efficiently, implement best management practices and ensure environmental protection, all while harvesting wood for value added products that every Mainer in the state utilizes daily. Over the past decade, the cost of equipment has doubled, predominately because of mandated emission requirements by the federal government and most recently, because of tariffs on imported equipment and parts.

Additionally, markets in the state have been constrained because of inflation, high interest rates, reductions in construction, tariffs and global competition. Logging contractors have no control over markets, but they are at the whim and mercy of those markets as price takers, not price setters. I can assure you that the price for wood today has been reduced as markets have been reduced, but the cost for loggers have not. Loggers cannot simply ask for more money for the type of work that they do. As a result, they are significantly constrained to invest in their companies and the equipment that is so important to the production of forest products that all of us rely upon.

Lastly, we would like to see this bond bill have less prescription and more guard rails to ensure integrity and accountability. The Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Fund (AFFPIF), which is overseen by a board of stakeholders representing various parts of agriculture and forestry, including myself, would be an appropriate repository for the entire corpus of this bond. AFFPIF is in the process of setting up competitive guidelines for future funding opportunities and could do the work necessary to ensure the funds in this bond are spent judiciously. Each industry is in need of support, but we must verify the types of businesses that are seeking assistance, ensure that funds are spent wisely, and allow competition in the marketplace as well as revolving loans to make sure these funds can continue to positively impact the Maine economy long after the bond proceeds are disbursed.

In closing, LD 2094 would provide much needed resources to important work being done by Maine's heritage industries. I believe this bond would be the first of its kind in the history of Maine and would encourage much needed investment in these sectors. We are thankful for your time and service to the people of Maine and encourage you to vote ought to pass as amended.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.