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Testimony of Woodland Pulp LLC's Scott Beal in Opposition to LD-2212- Part O, concerning the proposed changes to the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program.

Good morning, Senator Rotundo, Senator Grohoski, Representative Gattine, Representative Sayre and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Taxation Committees.

My name is Scott Beal. I live in Baileyville and retired from Woodland Pulp in 2023 and now am employed on a part time basis.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with the proposed changes in Part O for last year and the future elimination of the BETR program.

This program has been a tremendous benefit to our facilities in Baileyville. Specifically, if the proposed changes are enacted, it will mean about a \$150,000 reduction for last year and approximately a \$300,000 impact this tax year for a combined loss of over \$450,000 to Woodland Pulp and our sister company, St. Croix Chipping, LLC, when combined.

Being situated in Baileyville, as you may well know, we in Washington County are presently experiencing considerable upheaval with the County's

finances. The 2026 County budget has Baileyville's tax assessment increasing by 24% over last year for a tax assessment of \$817,955.

Unfortunately, it's not unreasonable to expect this upward trend to continue. The mills' total tax assessment from the town historically accounts for between 55% to as much as 65% of the host municipality's taxation derived revenue.

It's incumbent of me to mention that we fully recognize this is a county issue, through no fault of the state, yet this is our reality.

Woodland Pulp participates in a very challenging global pulp market. The dynamics of which resulted in a month-long market related downtime last November and December. Most recently, the pulp mill has shutdown because of the extreme price of natural gas along with limited availability of the fuel on some days.

Simply stated, we need BETR perhaps now, more than ever.

In closing, and on behalf of the approximately 440 women and men employed at our mills, please reject any changes to reduce and /or eliminate the BETR program by keeping it in full force and effect.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to explain to the committees how important this Tax Reimbursement program is to our facilities. I would be happy to try to respond to any questions.

Scott Beal
Woodland Pulp LLC
Baileyville, Maine