



Testimony of

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Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs on LD 2212, An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Friday, February 27, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; 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, which was created in 1995, is a regional educational non-profit organization that represents logging and associated trucking contractors throughout the Northeast, predominately in the state of Maine.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership in support of the proposed Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's request within LD 2212, better known as the Governor's Supplemental Budget. Additionally, we would like to make a suggestion for this budget discussion pertaining to LD 2094, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Maine's Agricultural and Forestry Sectors, which received a public hearing in this committee on January 20, 2026.

Included in my testimony today is a copy of our most recent logging and trucking economic impact study. You will note that as of 2024, logging and trucking contractors in Maine employed over 2,744 people directly and were indirectly responsible for the creation of an additional 1,715 jobs. This employment and the investments that contractors make contributed \$534 million to the state's economy in 2024. However, what is also evident in this study are the changes that are taking place in the forest economy. I can tell you that from the time we published our first study in 2017 and this most recent study, logging and trucking jobs as well as economic impact have dropped by 40%.

As a result, the PLC has been advocating for more funding for logging and forest truckers from the Mills Administration for the last seven years. We believe strongly that the funding recommended in LD 2094 could be included in this budget proposal as a one time allocation for

the programming discussed at the bond hearing, instead of pursuing the bond pathway. It is unclear what will occur with bond discussions this legislative session and we are supportive of an all hands on deck approach to providing a surgical investment in our industry.

To this point, we would advocate for an amendment to ACF's budget request, to provide \$50 million for the programs mentioned within the original bond request. The original request for the bond was \$40 million and we have advocated for an additional \$10 million, bringing the total to \$50 million. The additional \$10 million would be dedicated to a low-interest revolving loan program for logging companies, established by LD 1733 in the first session of the 132nd Legislature.

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.

In closing, we are supportive of the Governor's budget request and would like to advocate for additional funding from the bond discussion to provide a much needed investment into the important work being done by Maine's heritage industries. We are thankful for your time and service to the people of Maine and if you have any thoughts or questions, I would be happy to answer them.