



March 2, 2021

The Honorable Senator James Dill, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Maggie O'Neil, Chair  
And esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **Letter of Opposition for LD 125**, 'An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture'.

Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

I represent the Aroostook Partnership, a unique private/public partnership of nearly 100 businesses, the Northern Maine Development Commission and the four colleges in Aroostook County. The mission of the Partnership is to grow Aroostook County's economy and, in that capacity, support our natural resource-based economy in all practical ways.

We at the Partnership have always promoted smart, practical and sustainable uses of our vast rural lands and natural resources. Being geographically removed from many of the benefits of diversified business investments and entrepreneurship found in the more populated areas of the state, Aroostook County's economy relies heavily on our two major industries of agriculture and forestry. We believe LD 125 introduces unnecessary regulation on landowners which will, in many cases, cause lower stumpage yields due to the elimination of existing responsible herbicide application practices.

I have reviewed what information is available in support of this bill and none of it appears to be grounded in science or fact. I have, however, taken the time to research the facts on what appears to be the principle herbicide of the claimed need for this bill, glyphosate, commonly known as Roundup. Glyphosate appears to be the most popular herbicide in the county and used by millions of homeowners everywhere. It's probably one of the most studied herbicides in history and every responsible regulating authority seems to continue allowing its use as prescribed, both commercially and residentially. The carcinogenic claims made by one individual testifying for this bill last session seem to be completely unsubstantiated.

After a quick research query on glyphosate, I found a report done by the EPA which seems to set the record straight, *"In a 1993 review, the EPA, considered glyphosate to be noncarcinogenic and relatively low in dermal and oral acute toxicity. The EPA considered a "worst case" dietary risk model of an individual eating a lifetime of food derived entirely from glyphosate-sprayed fields with residues at their maximum levels. This model indicated that no adverse health effects would be expected under such conditions."* (Registration Decision Fact Sheet for Glyphosate (EPA-738-F-93-011) USEPA 1993.



[www.aroostookpartnership.org](http://www.aroostookpartnership.org)

11 West Presque Isle Rd., PO Box 779, Caribou, ME 04736  
Voice: (207) 551-6601, Toll Free in ME: 1-800-427-8736, Fax: (207) 493-3108, TTY: (207) 498-6377

I don't claim to be a qualified forester nor an environmental engineer, but I do have a degree in Wood Science and Technology from the University of Maine and have taken courses on silviculture. The practice of aerial herbicide application has been a component of responsible forestry operations for many years and it helps landowners produce more high-value timber in shorter time cycles, which is good for the entire value chain of our forest products industry in Maine.

I simply see no verifiable justification for this legislation and, if it passes, all indications are it will do far more harm to our forest products industry than it will good to mitigate any unsubstantiated claims from those promoting this aerial spray ban. As our forest products industry leans into the FOR/Maine initiative intended to grow the industry from \$8.5B to \$12B by 2025 and supported by Maine's 10-year Strategic Economic Plan, this bill would create considerable headwinds in achieving those critical output goals in recovering and growing our economy.

As Aroostook and other rural counties support of our two primary rural Maine industries of Forestry and Agriculture, I ask that you vote ONTP on LD 125.

Respectfully,

**Paul Towle**

President & CEO

[ptowle@aroostookpartnership.org](mailto:ptowle@aroostookpartnership.org)

Direct: 207-551-6601

Reception: 207-498-8736



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