



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of LD 1549
An Act To Establish the Maine Forest Advisory Board
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
April 29, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is Troy Jackson and I have the great honor of serving as President of the Maine Senate. I proudly represent District 1, which is northern Aroostook County stretching roughly from Caribou north to the St. John Valley. I am here today to testify in support of LD 1549, "An Act to Establish the Maine Forest Advisory Board."

As all of you on this committee are aware by now, I have spent a number of years working as a logger in the forest products industry. In addition, I represent a large constituency of those who have worked hard in the woods to make a living for their families. Both of these factors were a big part of the reason I ran for the Legislature in the first place. As a result, over the course of my years of service, I have worked on a number of proposals related to the economic impact and environmental conditions in the logging and forest products industry.

There is no doubt that the forest products industry is an essential part of our state's character, economy, heritage and environmental landscape. Maine is the most forested state in the nation, with 17.5 million acres of forest covering nearly 90 percent of our land mass.¹ The forest products industry contributes over \$8 billion to our economy annually, and our forest provides a wide range of recreational activities that Mainers across our state enjoy.

As time goes on, however, we as Mainers continue to face an increasingly complex mixture of problems in our forest. The issues include climate change, drought, fire, insects, and wildlife and habitat management. For one example, in this year alone this committee has already dealt with a number of important and complicated proposals on the use of herbicides and glyphosates in the Maine woods.

It's critical that conversations around Maine's forest take into account a wide variety of factors when making decisions on public policy. This bill aims to address the complexity of these issues by creating the Maine Forest Advisory Board. The board would include representatives of the logging industry, non-profits, wildlife organizations, as well as the Departments of Agriculture,

¹https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/publication-15817-usda-forest-service-fia-annual-report-508.pdf

Conservation and Forestry, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Marine Resources. The board would provide input on the state forest action plan required under the federal Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. The board is directed to submit a report outlining conditions and trends in the State's forests to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature.

Mainers deserve to know that our forests are managed in a thoughtful and comprehensive way — one that respects the livelihoods of people working in the woods, protects our natural habitat and public health, and ensures that future generations can enjoy the beauty that our forests bring to everyday life.

Thank you so much for your time, and I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Troy Jackson
President of the Maine Senate
Senate District 1