

Jo Myers
Waldoboro

Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

My name is Jo Myers, farming in Waldoboro, Maine for over 20 years. Approximately 100 acres of our 180 farm is in forest which we have commercially logged and harvest annually for our winter wood supply.

My brother is an independent logger in western Massachusetts. My father began his working career as a logger.

I am writing to urge you to pass LD 1549. Forestry in Maine was and remains a diverse endeavor with industrial forest companies often owned by companies based outside of Maine, Maine based forestry companies which contract with landowners to harvest wood, independent loggers who are often their only employee. Wood product industries, mills, trucking companies and other businesses that use Maine's logs have ceased operation over the past few decades for many reasons and remain a declining part of Maine's economy. This trend has devastated many of Maine's rural communities.

I urge your consideration to add a rural community representative who can speak to rural economics and logging. There are several rural development organizations across rural Maine who can identify a rural representative to be appointed by the Speaker of the House. LD 1549 1.B. includes members representing different interests in logging. It is critical in the implementation of this bill that there is one member who is an independent logger. Logging in different parts of Maine work in different forest habitat. It is important that these different forest habitats are represented in the membership and given the diversity of members listed in LD 1549, implementation of this legislation should assure that different forest habitats are represented by the membership.

Logging remains an important component of Maine's economy but it can and should be revitalized. LD 1549 provides an opportunity to focus on the segment of logging in Maine which may have the brightest future - the Maine based logging businesses and the independent logger.

The bill would include academics in forest ecology. This position is key because the science on forest land and carbon sequestration is evolving and we do not yet know to what extent clear cutting, selective cutting, forest diversity and other aspects of forest ecology relate to carbon sequestration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. And thank you to Representative O'Neil, Representative Pluecker, and Senators Bennett and Maxmin for introducing this bill.