



*Woodland Management Services  
Green Certified Resource Managers*

## MID-MAINE FORESTRY

Barbara E. Brusila • Mitchell W. Kihn  
Licensed Professional Foresters

1320 Western Road • Warren, Maine 04864  
(207) 273-4046

email: [midmaineforestry@gmail.com](mailto:midmaineforestry@gmail.com) - Mitch  
[midmaineforestry2@gmail.com](mailto:midmaineforestry2@gmail.com) - Barrie

Testimony for the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry IN OPPOSITION to LD 993, An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine.

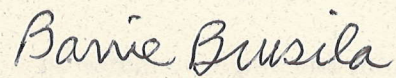
Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Barrie Brusila. I'm a consultant forester with Mid-Maine Forestry and have been a licensed forester in Maine since 1980. During these past 43 years, I have worked cooperatively with the Maine Forest Service in many ways, and under all the various administrations within that time span. When the need arises for stakeholder impact on a given topic, the Maine Forest Service thoughtfully assembles a diverse group of people with knowledge and expertise on the issue at hand. Examples of committees I've participated in include the Maine Forest Carbon Program Task Force and the Maine Forest Certification Advisory Committee. These committees were given a specific task to do, and when the job was completed and reports were written, the committees were disbanded. This model works. In contrast, LD 993 proposes to establish a committee of 21 members with a vague, generic list of duties. The bill as written raises some serious questions:

- 1) **LD 993 mandates that appointments to the proposed Advisory Board are to be made by politicians, NOT the Maine Forest Service.** The Maine Forest Service should be able to continue to choose which experts/professionals to work with on any given topic, and should not be forced to work with a group of political appointees.
- 2) **What is the Maine Forest Service supposed to do with the advice of this committee?** Is it purely advice, which they can follow or not as they choose, or are they mandated to follow the whims of the committee? This is not specified in LD 993. If this Board is established, it should be made clear that their opinions are indeed ADVISORY only, and not a mandate.
- 3) **Although there are 21 very specific members listed in LD 993, the word "forester" is unbelievably not mentioned once! If this Board is established, it should include foresters, and specifically a consultant forester.** According to a 2023 fact sheet published by the US Forest Service and the Maine Forest Service, Maine has over 9.4 million acres of forest land in non-industrial ownership. This is over 50% of the total woodland in the state. Consultant foresters are very important for the stewardship of these lands, and the 78,000+ landowners who own them.

I suggest that you consider the Advisory Committee model utilized by Baxter State Park. They have 4 specific Advisories (Finance, Scientific Forest Management Area, Research, and BSP.) I have been on the Scientific Forest Advisory Committee for over 25 years. Members with desired expertise are selected by appropriate Park staff people and then approved by the Baxter State Park Authority. Volunteer members of these Advisories have provided invaluable help to Park staff over the years. Volunteer Advisors are aware that their advice is simply advice. It's up to Park Staff to utilize it as they wish. The system works.

If you choose to pass LD 993, I encourage you to amend it to address the above concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barrie Brusila".

Barrie Brusila  
Licensed Forester #590