



**Testimony of the Atlantic Salmon Federation on
LD 993: An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine
March 20, 2023**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

My name is John Burrows, and I am the Executive Director of U.S. Operations for the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF), an international non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Atlantic salmon and their ecosystems. I represent more than 2,500 members and volunteers with ASF, our Maine Council, and a dozen local affiliates working on river and fisheries conservation and restoration across Maine.

ASF is strongly in support of LD 993: An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine.

LD 993 would create the Maine Forest Advisory Board, comprised of 21 members with a broad suite of expertise, interests, perspectives, and backgrounds. The functions of the board are clearly defined within the bill and are purely advisory in nature. There would be no formal role in rulemaking or permitting decisions, which is a difference between this proposed Board and many of the councils and boards that exist for Maine's other natural resources and environmental agencies. The Maine Forest Advisory Board would serve to facilitate communication, engagement, and dialogue amongst diverse stakeholders and to ensure broad input and participation in the development and implementation of forest policy in Maine.

The endangered wild Atlantic salmon is an iconic Maine species that depends on our state's forested landscape for its survival. Without healthy, intact forests to provide shade, habitat, cold water, and nutrients, Atlantic salmon and our other native cold-water fish species, like Eastern brook trout, would not exist in Maine. The same is true for myriad other bird, fish, and wildlife species: Maine's great biological diversity – including 139 rare plants and animals, 21 of which are globally rare – is largely a result of us having the largest unfragmented forested landscape east of the Mississippi.

It is important for Maine to look at our 17.5 million acres of forest comprehensively and holistically. We need to consider biological diversity, recreation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, carbon sequestration, and recreation along with sustainable timber harvesting that supports good jobs and our valuable forest products industry. Engagement amongst and between those interested in all of these areas, the public, and the Maine Forest Service is essential to having robust, comprehensive forest policy in Maine and the Maine Forest Advisory Board will do just this.

We urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 993. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Burrows". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John R.J. Burrows
Executive Director, U.S. Operations
Atlantic Salmon Federation