

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Eugene Mahar. I am a Maine licensed Professional Forester, a resident of Hermon and the Forest Resources Manager - Maine for LandVest, Inc. I am writing you in opposition to LD 993 *An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine*. I have 25 plus years in the forest industry and in my current role as Forest Resources Manager for LandVest, Inc. I represent and have management responsibilities for approximately 1.2 million acres of forestlands in the state of Maine covering a wide range of ownerships sizes and management objectives.

I find this bill extremely unnecessary as it appears to be a solution looking for a problem that does not exist and attempts to assert legislative control over the development and implementation of forest policy in Maine. As you consider LD 993, I ask you to please keep the following points in mind:

- Of Maine's 17.6 million forested acres, 15.9 million of those acres are privately owned commercial forestland, so if you love and recreate in the outdoors, you likely have done so on privately-owned forest land.
- Maine has 8.3 million acres of forestland certified under one of the three nationally recognized voluntary forest sustainability certification programs, ranking 2nd in the nation for most certified acres by state.
- Maine's private forest landowners work collaboratively with the state, University of Maine System and environmental advocacy groups on a number of successful initiatives to protect Maine's wildlife resources, that also have the added benefits of keeping forests as forest while supporting Maine's economy (contributing \$8.1 billion and over 33,000 jobs). These efforts include:
 - Maine Climate Council
 - FOR/Maine
 - 30-year Bird Project
 - Maine Spruce Budworm Taskforce
 - Cooperative Forestry Research Unit
 - Fisheries Improvement Network (FIN)
 - Sustainable Forestry Initiative – Maine Implementation Committee
 - Outcome Based Forestry Panel
 - Keeping Maine's Forest

- The practice of forestry is a science. Maine laws that regulate forestry practices do not necessarily reflect and promote sound scientific based management and passing this bill would perpetuate that problem.

It's time for both Maine's legislative leaders and the general public to recognize that the use of Maine's private lands is a *privilege* and not a right. LD 993 would burden private landowners with further unnecessary restrictions that will ultimately alienate landowners, which will result in limitations on recreational opportunities that many of us currently and respectively enjoy on these lands.

I thank you for your consideration and respectfully ask you to vote ought not to pass on LD 993.

Respectively submitted,

Eugene Mahar

Hermon, ME