



March 20, 2023

Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Support of LD 993, An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecke and other distinguished members of the Committee, I offer this testimony in support of LD 993. My name is Roger Stephenson, and I am regional director for advocacy for the Union of Concerned Scientists climate and energy program.

UCS puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future. UCS has more than a half a million supporters nationally, including more than 2,500 in Maine.

Researchers looking at the climate perceptions and awareness of forest landowners and managers saw acknowledgement regarding the threats climate change pose for forests, but the same landowners and managers were somewhat unsure about what the future will bring with respect to the scale and timing of climate impacts, and how to prepare for same.¹ We know Maine's climate is changing. Uncertainty is predicated upon the future rates of emissions of heat trapping gases, the ecology of Maine forest systems and opportunities for resilience, and market forces related to the future forest industry.

Just as a person is encouraged to diversify a retirement portfolio to increase resilience and manage risk, Maine should be encouraged to diversify the group of responsible people and experts who know Maine's forests. The legislature can do this by passing LD 993 and authorizing a Forest Advisory Board.

A Forest Advisory Board would bring together a variety of viewpoints – loggers and biologists, commercial landowners and Indigenous tribes, sportsmen and ecologists – to share information, facilitate public input, look at the forest comprehensively, and advise the Maine Forest Service on policies to keep our forests healthy, intact, and productive.

A Forest Advisory Board will serve as a significantly important tool to help secure the future of Maine's forests. Thank you for the opportunity to express support for LD 993.

¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10549811.2020.1803919?journalCode=wjsf20>