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February 28, 2024

Written Testimony in Support of LD 2212, An Act to Strengthen Maine's  
Agriculture Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Members of the Committee:

The President of our Association, Tony Wood of T&D Wood Energy in Sanford, had planned to speak before you today but was unfortunately at the last minute unable to do so. Hence his submitted written testimony, and mine.

Maine has four wood pellet manufacturing plants. Each of these came into existence less than 20 years ago and provides critical employment in critical areas of our state. Each required substantial start-up capital.

One of these, located in Strong, is located in the former Forster Manufacturing plant which had given Strong the title of "Toothpick Capital of the World." The firm was acquired by a capital investment group interested in emerging energy technologies. **A partnership with the Northern Forest Center nonprofit enabled the firm to expand its sales.** The firm has since been acquired by Lignetics Group, a national leader in wood energy products.

Another plant, Maine Woods Pellet Co in Athens, evolved from the very successful Linkletter & Sons logging operations and supplies wood pellets not only to a large number of retail chains but also to College of the Atlantic's state of the art heating plant. In addition, **thanks to support from the Finance Authority of Maine**, the logging and wood pellet operation generates the electricity which Athens Energy distributes to the region.

A third plant, family owned, in Ashland, provides the heating fuel for Northern Maine Community College and UMFK and supplies bagged product to many retailers.



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The fourth facility, T&D Wood Energy, manufactures a high quality pellet for pellet stoves, constantly expanding its operations and markets. As owner Tony Woods notes in his testimony provided to you, **their expansion has been made possible with public funds (particularly federal) and can continue only with programs such as outlined in LD 2212.**

The common thread in three of four pellet firm histories outlined above: **In meeting the demands of an evolving marketplace—which is critical to survival and success in Maine’s forestry and agriculture sectors—access to targeted public funding is virtually essential.**

*Bill Bell*  
Executive Director

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Maine Pellet Fuels Association  
LD 2212

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