



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Lands LLC
Bradbury Forest Mgmt.
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
Innovative Natural Resource Solutions
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
LandVest Inc.
Limington Lumber
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Pixelle Specialty Sol.
Pleasant River Lumber
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser

Testimony opposing LD 676 An Act To Reclassify Part of the Androscoggin River to Class B

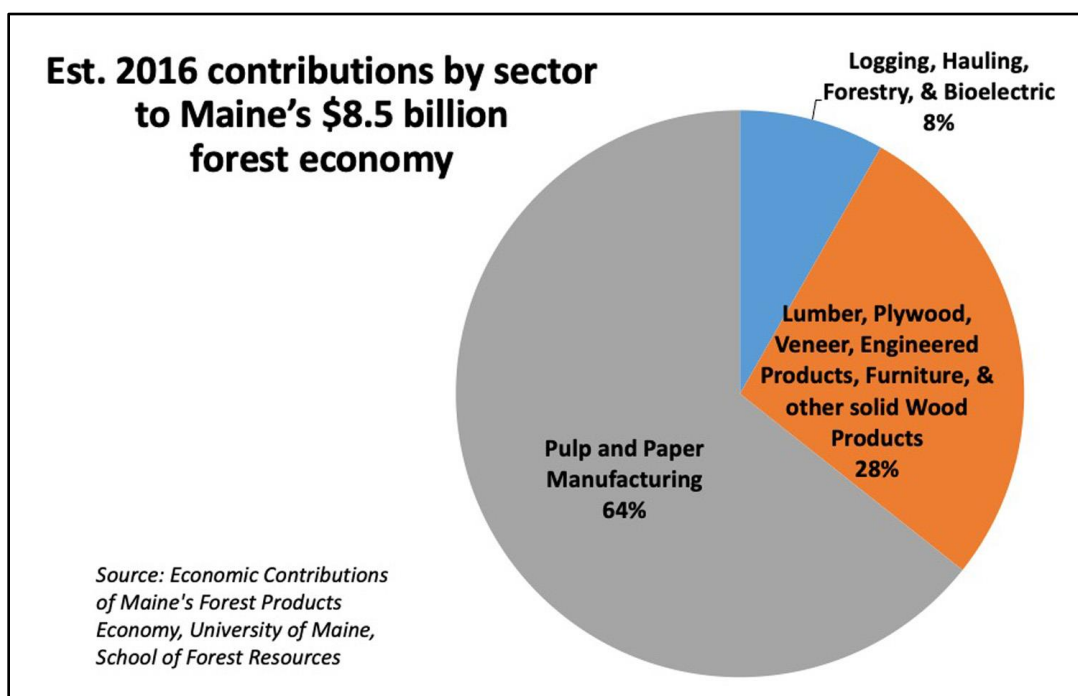
May 3, 2021

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Patrick Strauch from Exeter, Maine, and the executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC).

BRIEF INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

I represent Maine's forest product industry, which represent more than \$8 billion in economic contribution to the state's economy, and more than 33,000 direct and indirect jobs.



Even with the mill closures since 2014, the paper industry still plays a very significant role in Maine, especially in rural areas.

Six major paper mills remain and two, ND Paper in Rumford and Pixelle in Jay, are on the Androscoggin River.

The Forest Opportunity Roadmap Project has set a goal to advance Maine's economic contribution to \$12 billion dollars in 2025. Prior to COVID we were on our way with over a billion dollars in capital investments a 30% increase in pulpwood consumption by Maine mills in 2019.

The forest industry was classified as an essential industry during the COVID epidemic, and this important economic engine helped Maine families despite dramatic decrease in print paper demand and the eruption of the Pixelle Digester. These factors are still influencing operations at these facilities and we should be cautious that regulatory stability is maintained during this time of recovery.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES FOR RECLASSIFICATION

These mills are meeting the standards of class C waters on a complicated river ecosystem through extraordinary measures. However, MEDEP has opposed previous upgrade proposals to upgrade the river to class B status because there was no feasible approach to ensure attainment of Class B dissolved oxygen criteria in the lower Androscoggin river.

There are several reasons why the DEP and the Legislature do not reclassify a waterbody unless it meets the new classification:

- It puts any discharger to that waterbody in immediate noncompliance.
- It prohibits any new or increased discharge to that waterbody;
- It usually requires a change to discharge licenses; and
- A change in a license requires costly expenditures for equipment or process changes to meet the new license conditions.

DEP modeling indicates that the elimination of all discharges to the Androscoggin River will still not meet Class B water quality standards in the lower Androscoggin at all locations at all times.

MFPC opposes LD 676 because even the elimination of all discharges to the Androscoggin River will not improve water quality to Class B standards. It will simply increase costs for the mills, which already operate within existing discharge limits.

We urge you to vote **Ought Not To Pass** on LD 676.