



# 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 in Support (with Revisions) of LD 1429 An Act to Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommen- dations of the Maine Climate Council

May 17, 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).

Representative Dunphy's support and leadership on Climate Action Plan is appreciated in LD 1429, emphasizing the time sensitive recommendations of the Climate Council. I continue to serve on Governor Mills 39-member Climate Change Council. I also participated in the Natural and Working Lands Committee and currently serve on the Forest Carbon Task Force.

Climate Plan Strategies relevant to the Natural and Working Land committee include that relate to forestry issues:

### Section 15.

Establish the University of Maine as the coordinating hub for state applied research on forestry, agriculture, and natural land-related climate concerns, including research and development of climate friendly bio-based wood market innovation, and research around climate friendly agricultural practices.

Increase by 2030, the total acreage of conserved lands in the state to 30% through voluntary, focused purchases of land and working forest or farm conservations easements.

### Section 13.

Increase technical service provider capacity by 2024 to deliver data, expert guidance, and support for climate solutions to communities, landowners, farmers, loggers, and foresters at the Department of ACF Maine Forest Service, IF&W, Department of Marine Resources and the University of Maine.

The funding recommendations suggested in these areas of LD 1429 are important to the success of the initiative.

The one action area I would like to focus on by providing some clarifying recommendations is the sections relating to initiatives to increase carbon storage on land (Sections 4 & 9)

#### Section 4.

Establishes a goal of determining a statewide baseline inventory of carbon stock sequestration in Maine's land and in coastal and marine ecosystems. This is an important objective. For example, current estimates of the carbon sequestration of Maine's forestland (offsets) are equivalent to 55% of Maine's petroleum emissions. An additional 15% of these emissions are offset by sinking of carbon in durable wood products<sup>1</sup>.

However, references in the section to inventories of carbon storage on the Farm and Open Space and Tree growth taxation properties will be very problematic since the methodology currently available is not precise enough to measure individual acreage differences. Additionally, these taxation programs are just a subset of the total opportunity to sequester carbon using natural ecosystems. We do not recommend including the inventory provisions for tree growth and open space taxation programs at this time.

#### Section 9.

The provision to amend the Tree Growth taxation program to "declare it is in the public interest to encourage the increased sequestration of carbon in this State" is a major policy determination. The Natural and Working Lands group (NWL) group discussed the need to create stability in the TG program and to emphasize the need to not subject the program to continuous proposals for adding additional requirements (public recreation guarantees, Sunday hunting obligations, and labor requirements, to name a few.) While increasing the sequestration of carbon on land may seem intuitive, it can turn the active forest management purpose in the tree growth law on its head through misinterpretation.

The Forest Carbon Task Force is currently researching the opportunity to restructure the Open Space taxation law to see if there are ways to include recognition of carbon friendly management practices. This group will be reporting back its findings later this year. Therefore, we do not recommend adding this provision into the Tree Growth law at this time.

Again, I appreciate Representative Dunphy's leadership on Climate Change and would be glad to discuss our recommendations in further detail.

Thank you, Patrick Strauch

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<sup>1</sup> [Maine's Carbon Budget - Center for Research on Sustainable Forests - University of Maine \(umaine.edu\)](http://umaine.edu)