

Testimony in support of LD 1979

February 28, 2022

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Ronnie Green and I reside in the town of Plymouth.

I am here today to speak in support of: *LD 1979 "An Act To Sustain Good-paying Jobs in the Forest Products Industry by Ensuring Consistency between Comprehensive River Resource Management Plans and State Water Quality Standards"*

Many of you know me as the firefighter that has roamed the halls of the State House for years advocating for firefighters and their families. I haven't always been a firefighter; I grew up in Plymouth on the same farm I live on today. As far back as I can remember I would go off to the woods with my grandfather often being towed behind a bulldozer on my runner sled. As a young kid I grew a passion for the woods and spent as much time there as I could. Before I had a drivers license I would take the old farm truck loaded with pulpwood to the railroad siding in East Newport to be unloaded, I'd catch the bus to school from there and return to get the empty truck in the afternoon. I attended the forestry program in high school and went on to study wood harvesting and small business at NMVTI in Presque Isle. After school I spent a while cutting wood, a short time in a sawmill, and a few years hauling wood. Most of the wood I cut and hauled over the years went to Scott Paper in Skowhegan, now known as SAPPI. That paper mill played a huge role in putting me through school, buying my home, marrying my wife, and starting my family.

Growing up in the area I watched many good jobs go away as mills and industries closed and moved away. My other grandfather spent a career before and after World War II at Fayscott in Dexter, many of my friends and family members worked at H.P. Hood in Newport, Dexter Shoe, Guilford Industries, Eastland Woolen Mills, Great Northern Paper, Eastern Fine Paper, Bucksport, and so on, all of those are gone. I still have friends and family members that are employed in the forest products industry, and they are constantly in fear that their lives will be turned upside down with one more mill closure.

When I see the log trucks rolling through Newport or see the lights and the stacks glowing at SAPPI from miles away it is always a good feeling knowing one of them is still up and running, people still have good jobs there, and it is feeding the economy for miles around. While the SAPPI mill doesn't play so much of a role in my life today as it did in the 1980's it surely plays a big role for hundreds and thousands of people all across the state and the region.

If we haven't learned anything else in the past couple of years, we have surely learned the importance of keeping manufacturing here at home and not overseas. I urge you to please pass LD 1979 to keep SAPPI running and keep the people all around the state fed that benefit from its operation in one way or another.

Ronnie Green