



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

A & A Brochu Logging
American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Land, LLC
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
INRS
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
Kennebec Lumber
LandVest Inc.
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
St. Croix Tissue
St. Croix Chipping
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser
Woodland Pulp

Testimony in Support of LDs 1363, 1433, 1476

“An Act to Support Extraction of Common Minerals by Amending the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act”

“An Act to Exclude Pegmatites from the Definition of ‘Metallic Mineral Mining’”

“An Act to Amend the Definition of “Metallic Mineral” in the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act”

Testimony Neither for nor Against LD 1495

“Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study the Role of Critical Minerals as a Resource in the State”

April 13, 2023

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Hello Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. I am Patrick Strauch from Exeter, Maine, and the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC). I am submitting testimony today in support of the first block of mining bills up for consideration, except for LD 1495, which the Council is neither for nor against.

Since 1961, the Maine Forest Products Council has represented our state's diverse forest products community, including logging contractors, sawmills, paper mills, biomass energy facilities, pellet manufacturers, furniture manufacturers, and the owners of more than eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine.

Our landowner community has varied interests in the option to mine metallic minerals, but they are interested in creating a regulatory framework that can use the best science and environmental protections to proceed with a possible project. As we have testified before previous legislatures, MFPC is in favor of the effort to revive mining in Maine in a manner that is environmentally safe and will not jeopardize the stewardship principles we adhere to on our lands. If done the right way, mining in Maine will provide an additional diversification of landowner income that would strengthen forestland investments and support the working forest model in Maine.

As drafted, we feel that LDs 1363, 1433 and 1476 all create important opportunities to mine materials that don't carry the same risks as other materials. For instance, we understand that certain rock formations that contain lithium can be extracted through open pit mining similar to rock quarries that have long been in use throughout the state. This extraction process would not cause acid drainage from tailings, which are the major water quality concern for metallic mineral

mining. We should allow crushing, sorting and grinding of rocks containing lithium under the rock quarry regulations while continuing to regulate the chemical processing of lithium under the mining law. These two processes are vastly different with different risk profiles.

The Council is neither for nor against LD 1495 because we feel that the issue has been thoroughly studied by the Department and by previous Legislatures, so we don't see value in any further delays. We would suggest, however, that the Committee consider an annual report back from the Department each year on mining projects and their impacts.

Maine is at an important crossroads. Global interest in advancing green technologies as a means to mitigate climate change have made certain materials, such as lithium, high value and in high demand. By 2025, demand for lithium is expected to be three times higher than it was in 2018, as it is utilized in everything from laptops and phones to electric cars and electricity grids. By allowing this material to be mined right here in Maine, we have the opportunity to ensure that the mining practices utilized for these materials are environmentally and socially sound. They also present an important economic opportunity for rural Maine.

For these reasons, MFPC landowners are supportive of the revisions to the mining laws that will enable mining activities to be seriously evaluated and implemented in Maine.