

Senator Lawrence,  
Representative Berry and  
esteemed members of the  
Committee on Energy,  
Utilities & Technology  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333



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March 16, 2021

**RE: LD 597, An Act to Establish the Wood Energy Investment Program. In support of.**

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I would first like to thank Senator Troy Jackson for sponsoring LD 597 and all of the bipartisan support this is receiving.

I am Matt Bell, co-founder, owner and operator of Northeast Pellets in Ashland, Maine, as well as past president of the Maine Pellet Fuels Association. Northeast Pellets manufactures super premium wood pellets for residential, commercial and institutional use. We package in 25lb, 40lb and 1-ton bags, as well as selling loose bulk. Started in 2004 we were the first of the 4 existing pellet mills in our great state. We historically produce 15,000 tons annually with an underutilized capacity of 50,000.

Over the years, we have worked closely with many of our fine State agencies, most notably, the Maine Forest Service when they received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. These funds were used to convert several state facilities over to pellets and biomass heat through their wood to energy grant program. This was a win win for everyone involved as it was intended to stimulate the economy, create jobs, promote renewable energy all while allowing the recipient to realize significant savings and lessen their dependence on foreign oil. LD 597 is Maine's chance to once again stimulate our local economy, create jobs, promote renewable energy and save money without requiring upfront tax payer funding. This will greatly aid in the return on investment, further justifying individual conversions.

If passed and funded, LD 597 has the potential to greatly increase our bulk sales and deliveries. This will allow Northeast Pellets to increase our production hours by hiring more employees and provide larger and much needed outlet for our local sawmill residuals. This also means more capital investments at our facility and additional mobile equipment purchased. In turn, this will generate more taxes for the town, state and federal government.

All of the mills in our area are struggling, but we survive by working together. We share parts, equipment and expertise as needed. With increased production, comes increased efficiencies. This extra volume would allow us to be more competitive against cheap Canadian imports that are flooding the market in our state and allow us to ship further into new markets and other states.

Northeast Pellets is proud to be working on this project, creating sustainable, renewable jobs in our community while lessening our dependence on foreign oil. We ask you for your support and recommend an "ought to pass" on this economically beneficial bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Matthew S Bell  
President  
Northeast Pellets, LLC