



Testimony of

DANA A. DORAN
Executive Director
Professional Logging Contractors of Maine

**Before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology in Support of LD 815 –
An Act to Support School Decarbonization**

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Dana Doran, and I am the Executive Director of the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine. The Professional Logging Contractors of Maine (PLC) is a trade association that represents logging and associated trucking contractors throughout the state of Maine. The PLC was formed in 1995 to give independent contractors a voice in a rapidly changing forest industry.

As of 2017, logging and trucking contractors in Maine employed over 3,900 people directly and were indirectly responsible for the creation of an additional 5,400 jobs. This employment and the investments that contractors make contributed \$620 million to the state's economy. Our membership, which includes 200 contractor members and an additional 100 associate members, employs over half of the individuals who work in this industry and is also responsible for 80% of Maine's annual timber harvest.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify on behalf of our membership neither for nor against LD 815 – An Act to Support School Decarbonization. Our organization does not want to take a policy position at this time on whether schools should be decarbonized or not, but we do want to raise a few issues that we have found in the bill language. We have raised these issues with Senator Maxmin and we are thankful for her receptivity to the issues that we have raised.

As a member of the Natural and Working Lands working group of the Maine Climate Council and also a member of the Governor's Forest Carbon Task Force, the PLC and our membership are generally supportive of legislation that will facilitate development of new renewable modern wood heat and power projects that could positively impact the management of Maine's forests, provide new markets for our members and contribute positively to our climate. At this point, it is not clear if this bill will have that effect. That said, we have asked the sponsor to consider some changes to the bill because of some concerns that we have raised.

First, we feel that this bill as written is singling out one energy source, i.e. solar, without being completely inclusive of other renewable energy sources that are already specified in Maine law. It is our opinion that if one source is going to be specified, then all renewable energy sources as defined by current Maine law should be included.

Second, the Governor [signed a bill into law in 2019, LD 375](#), which states that schools should give deference to wood heating systems when considering new construction or renovation projects. It appears that the bill specifies "solar power purchases" in §10123, 1., which would put the bill at odds with current

law. From our perspective, it seems likely that the bill would achieve the intended result if the words “solar power purchases” were removed from this section.

Additionally, in current law, §10123, 3. School Payments, on line 25 of the bill language, it states that, “and natural gas conservation projects” would remain in the statute as it pertains to this program going forward. Since natural gas is technically not carbon neutral and not mentioned in Maine’s renewable energy definitions, perhaps the bill should be amended further to state in line 25 that, “incentives for cost-effective carbon neutral electric and ~~natural gas conservation projects~~ heating projects in school.....”. This might help establish the intent of the bill and remove any conflict with fuel sources that are not carbon neutral.

Again, we are not taking a position on the overall intent of the bill, but merely pointing out inconsistencies with current Maine law that should be corrected if this bill moves forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide the opinion of our membership before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.