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**Testimony of Senator Russell Black before the Joint Standing Committee on
Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business**

May 4, 2021

*LD 768 An Act To Explore Alternative of Pulpwood and To Support Logging and Forestry
Industries*

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business I am Senator Russell Black and I represent Senate District 17. I am writing to provide testimony in support of LD 768 *An Act To Explore Alternative of Pulpwood and To Support Logging and Forestry Industries*.

I co-sponsored this legislation because I think that it is important that the state look at alternative uses of pulpwood and ways that the state can support the state's logging and forestry industries. The Maine Forest Products industry has a \$7.7 billion impact on Maine's economy but there are mounting challenges to the industry that need to be addressed.

One example is the loss of the pulp digester at the Pixelle Mill in Jay, which was destroyed in an explosion last April and the company has decided to not rebuild it. 177 direct jobs were lost because of this and significant amount of pulpwood has no market. The Jay Mill represented about 23 percent of the pulp market for the state of Maine. This has caused revenue losses, layoffs and loss of clients for Maine logging operations.

In closing, I would encourage the committee come up with legislation that would help come up with ideas to recover the loss of the pulp market created by the loss of the digester at the Jay Mill and that would help the Maine Forest Industry. Thank you