



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Lands LLC
Bradbury Forest Mgmt.
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
Innovative Natural
Resource Solutions
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
LandVest Inc.
Limington Lumber
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Pixelle Specialty Sol.
Pleasant River Lumber
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser

Testimony opposing LD 607 An Act To Restore Overtime Protections for Maine Workers

March 22, 2021

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and distinguished members of the Labor and Housing Committee, I am Patrick Strauch, executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC), which represents more than 300 member companies and over 15,000 direct jobs in the forest industry.

MFPC joins with the Maine Chamber of Commerce and other organizations that strongly oppose LD 607. Maine already is one of only six states that set their own overtime payment salary thresholds above the federal level. The other 44 states follow the federal salary threshold.

Maine's existing overtime law, in combination with the minimum wage that will be indexed for inflation, already sets a salary threshold that increases each year as the indexed minimum wage increases.

Because Maine's overtime threshold would be one of the highest in the nation -- higher than all other states in New England -- businesses would be incentivized to consider expanding in some other state, where labor costs and tax climates may be more favorable to investing in jobs.

Through the Forest Opportunity Roadmap (FOR/Maine), our industry is building on recent investments in the forest economy to promote continued growth. Through rigorous research, we have identified the global wood products that can be competitively made in Maine and now we are focusing on marketing Maine's bioeconomy. We are moving forward to commercialize new uses of wood and place Maine as a global center of wood technology innovation and we are developing a marketing plan to bring more capital investments to Maine.

Passage of LD 607 would only add to Maine's reputation as a costly outlier when it comes to attracting jobs and opportunities and encouraging existing business expansions. In order to have jobs, we need employers, large and small. LD 607 would send the wrong message to our existing and potential employers. It would tell them that they would have to pay significantly more to operate in Maine.

At a time when many of our members and their employees are still recovering from the market effects of the COVID pandemic this proposal is especially detrimental to our businesses.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this issue and urge the committee to please vote ONTP.