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Weyerhaeuser Testimony in Opposition to LD 1724 An Act To Create a Logging Dispute Resolution Board and To Require Proof of Ownership Documents To Be Available within 14 Days of Request

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee;

My name is Chris Fife and I am Public Affairs Manager for Weyerhaeuser. I am speaking today in opposition to LD 1724.

Weyerhaeuser owns and sustainably manages over 840,000 acres of timberland in Maine. Our timberlands are third party certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standards and support outdoor recreation, healthy wildlife habitat and the capture and storage of carbon. We rely on Maine loggers, truckers and road contractors to harvest our timber and get it to the mills. We are proud to be part of the forest industry supply chain in Maine which contributed over \$8 billion to Maine's economy in 2019.

Many of the loggers that harvest timber for Weyerhaeuser work for multiple forest landowners of varying size and with varying forest management objectives. Forest landowners and independent logging contractors in Maine need each other to maintain healthy businesses, a healthy industry and a healthy forest.

The stress on logging contractors in Maine is real. Loss of low-grade wood markets, a shortage of qualified operators, severe weather events, and now, dramatic increases in the cost of fuel and parts. When a logging contractor chooses to come to work for Weyerhaeuser two things are priority for us; ensuring safety concerns are recognized and addressed and having regular conversations about the health of their operations and working together to overcome challenges identified.

Weyerhaeuser is opposed to LD 1724 because we feel the establishment of a Logging Dispute Resolution Board is unnecessary. Protections provided by current law (wage and hour, anti-discrimination, and federal law) and contract provisions already provide the protection that it appears the Board would be designed for. The purpose of the Board in "hear(ing) disputes related to the logging industry" is unclear. The legislation states the costs of "arbitration" are to be borne by the party against whom the board decides, but otherwise does not explain how "arbitration" fits within the board's activities. Decisions rendered by a state board typically would not be characterized as "arbitration"; they would be administrative decisions reached pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedures Act.

Additionally, Section 3 would require any Maine employer who employs a “bond worker to certify that the employer “is not requiring the bond worker to engage in point-to-point hauling of forest products within the State or to otherwise violate federal cabotage laws.” The terms of Section 3 relate closely to the substance of LD 188, which the Legislature passed in 2021. The federal courts have ruled that LD 188 violates the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution and granted a preliminary injunction on enforcement. The proposed legislation violates the Constitution just as LD 188 does.

Weyerhaeuser respectfully urges this Committee not to support LD 1724.

Sincerely,

Chris Fife