



To: Sen. Daughtry, Rep. Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing

From: Johnny Sanchez, of 28 Mill Street, Orono, on behalf of myself and Food AND Medicine, nonprofit organization located in Brewer.

Re: Support for 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

Testimony: Hello, my name is Johnny Sanchez, I live in Orono in Penobscot county. I work for and submit this on behalf of Food AND Medicine, a nonprofit in Brewer founded in 2002, that organizes around issues of food security and other root causes of poverty. Generally, our mission is to pursue a future in which people do not have to choose between food, medicine and other basic necessities. We support LD 1724, and urge you and your fellow lawmakers to pass it in order to do right by the workers of an industry that has been a part of this state for generations.

The Logging Dispute Board that would be created by this bill would give independent contractors a place to which they could take legitimate disputes and have them heard without suing a major landowner, which is almost always drawn out and expensive for everyone involved. This process is daunting for contractors as the cost factor usually results in making the case useless to sue over. For instance, if a contractor is owed \$10,000, a legal suit may result in them paying an attorney as much as 40% of any money won in the case. Large landowners are aware of this imbalance of leveraging power. In this new process, the landowner and the contractor would have representatives – in addition to the neutral member of the State Board of Arbitration – creating a process that has the potential to make this process more equitable.

Food AND Medicine believes in advocating for those who are most affected by an unbalanced system by helping them make their voices heard. This bill would foster a more balanced and transparent process for resolving disputes between landowners and independent contractors.

Thank you.