



P.O. Box 127
Lincoln, ME 04457

www.themainelandstore.com
www.treelineinc.biz

Phone: 207-794-2044
Fax: 207-794-2047

March 8, 2022

LD1724

To: Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

From: Brian Souers, President, Treeline, Inc.

Treeline is a first-generation logging company located in Chester, Maine, now in our 41st year. Our company has 80 employees, operates five of logging crews, thirty trucks and harvests wood that is delivered to over twenty mills in this region. My daughter, Whitney, represents the next generation and runs about half of our business.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments 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. While I respect the sponsor's intent, this bill creates significant concerns and potential unintended consequences. Let me explain:

- The bill will create an open-ended logging dispute resolution board within the executive branch (Dept. of Labor) of state government. There is no precedent in state government for such a board.
- It is not clear if the board will hear disputes of landowners, mills, contractors, subcontractors, or the employees of contractors. As written, the resolution board could hear disputes from anyone in the industry. This seems excessively broad.
- As designed, the resolution Board has three members, one from the Maine Forest Products Council, one from the AFL-CIO (labor union) and one from the State Board of Arbitration. Logging Companies are not represented. Was this an oversight? Or by design?
- Businesses do not have access to any type of resolution board in state government as their current means of recourse is the judicial court system, which is where it should remain.
- There is already a dispute resolution system set up for loggers in the Maine Dept. of Ag., Conservation and Forestry, with the Maine Agricultural and Bargaining Board. The Maine Agricultural and Bargaining Board Act of 1973 was created so that agricultural businesses, including loggers, can form cooperatives. A cooperative, which is a group of similar businesses that join together for negotiation and sales purposes, can use the Maine Ag. Bargaining Board and settle disputes between Cooperatives and the businesses that they work with.
- The wording of this bill is confusing. The purpose is unclear.
- LD1724 has much more downside potential than upside. I respectfully ask you to not allow this bill to move forward.

Respectfully,

Brian Souers

President
Treeline, Inc.