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LD 1724 Testimony
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Before the Committee on Labor and Housing 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

Hello, my name is Makayla Voisine. I am a senior at the University of Maine at Farmington, but first and foremost, I the daughter of Ben Voisine, Owner of Voisine Brothers, Inc., a first generation logging company from Fort Kent. Since 1999, my father (Ben Voisine), Uncle (Joe Voisine), and Grandfather (Gary Voisine) have owned and managed this family logging business. They have been able to make decisions for their business and have done an excellent job of managing the challenges they face year after year. I have seen first-hand their struggles and successes.

I am here to speak on behalf of my family's business 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**, and how it will affect my family's logging business. Recently, the logging industry has been in challenging times due to the pandemic, loss of markets, labor shortages, and rising inflation. Loggers need help and LD 1724 is not the answer.

The problem with this bill is that it is very open ended and has no limit to its authority or power. There is a fear of what this bill could do to logging businesses such as ours.

First, the bill is not clear who will be able to bring a dispute to the resolution board. It could be VBI's employees, the land companies we provide service to, or the mills we supply wood to. How can this be beneficial when we are struggling to find qualified people to work independently and hopefully operate efficiently enough not to cause a financially crippling breakdown?

We already have systems through the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to hear industry disputes through a co-op system called The Maine Agricultural and Bargaining Board Act of 1973. Also, our employees can already voice their concerns to the Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance Commission, the Maine Labor Relations Board or even the Maine Human Rights Commission.

Second, the resolution board does not even have one individual that would represent the logging community. My family's logging business does not need a resolution board that does not represent the logging industry to tell them how to run their business.

Lastly, our business also does not want employee and subcontractor relationships, landowner and mill contracts and any of our other business relationships to be an open book and potentially analyzed and shared. These negotiations are often driven by need and availability and not a standard. This may seem minor, but we do not want any of our private business relationships or documents brought to a public dispute board.

In conclusion what our industry needs is access to better and stronger markets for our products we produce, help with increasing supply costs and access to industry trained employees.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.