



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Opposition to LD 1190

“An Act to Ensure a Fair Workweek by Requiring Notice of Work Schedules”

April 6, 2023

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, the following is testimony submitted on behalf of the Maine forest Products Council in opposition to LD 1190, “An Act to Ensure a Fair Workweek by Requiring Notice of Work Schedules.”

Maine’s forest supports an \$8.1 billion industry that sustains 33,000 jobs, which works out to roughly one out of every 24 jobs in Maine. The Maine Forest Products Council represents more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry. Members include landowners, paper mills, sawmills, loggers, truckers, foresters, panel manufacturers, biomass and pellet facilities and secondary manufacturers.

We are testifying today in strong opposition to this bill for a number of reasons. Workforce shortages are a real problem in our sector. It is predicted that by 2030, our industry will be short 5,000 workers. Even today, the effects of labor shortages have rippling effects throughout the industry that require employers and employees to work together and be flexible to keep pace with demand. If passed, LD 1190 would severely limit their ability to work together to address unforeseen circumstances and meet shift needs.

As drafted, LD 1190 makes a number of unreasonable demands on employers with five employees or more that include:

- Providing shift schedules two weeks in advance.
- Compensation to the employees ranging between one hour of pay to four hours of pay for necessary scheduling changes.
- A requirement to keep a record of schedules on file for three years, subject to inspection.

Under this bill, there are few circumstances short of a literal act of God that allow an employer to change schedules to address unforeseen circumstances and meet needs. Also of note is the fact that the bill allows an employee to request a shift change without penalty to the employer, but the employer would have to pay a penalty to the employee

who voluntarily picks up or switches shifts.

Companies represented on the MFPC Board

A & A Brochu Logging
American Forest Mgmt.
Baskahegan Co.
BBC Land, LLC
Columbia Forest Prod.
Cross Insurance
Family Forestry
Farm Credit East
Fontaine Inc.
H.C. Haynes
Huber Resources
INRS
J.D. Irving
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.
Key Bank
Kennebec Lumber
LandVest Inc.
Louisiana Pacific
Maibec Logging
ND Paper
Nicols Brothers
Pingree Associates
Prentiss & Carlisle
ReEnergy
Richard Wing & Son
Robbins Lumber
Sappi North America
Southern Maine Forestry
Stead Timberlands
St. Croix Tissue
St. Croix Chipping
TD Bank
Timber Resource Group
Timberstate G.
Wadsworth Woodlands
Wagner Forest Mgt.
Weyerhaeuser
Woodland Pulp

In 2019, Maine passed a paid leave law that guarantees employees time off. Should this bill pass, in addition to paying the employee who isn't able, for whatever reason, to cover their shift, the employer would also have to pay an additional employee to cover that shift, plus a penalty. Under this scenario, employers could be forced to pay 20 hours in payroll to cover an eight-hour shift, even though they had planned accordingly.

The bottom line is that LD 1190 sets a very negative tone for the relationship between employers and employees, and it will result in less flexibility for both employers and employees. And for what reason? The labor shortage that is felt in the forest products industry is being felt across all industries in Maine. Competition between employers for capable, hardworking and reliable workers is strong. Opportunities are everywhere for employees to consider if their needs aren't being met by an employer, and many employees in this industry are already covered by collective bargaining agreements.

For these reasons, the Maine Forest Products Council strongly urges you to **vote 'ought not to pass' on LD 1190.**

Thank you for your consideration.