



# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

## Companies represented on the MFPC Board

American Forest Mgmt.  
Baskahegan Co.  
BBC Lands LLC  
Bradbury Forest Mgmt.  
Columbia Forest Prod.  
Cross Insurance  
Family Forestry  
Farm Credit East  
Fontaine Inc.  
H.C. Haynes  
Huber Resources  
Innovative Natural  
Resource Solutions  
J.D. Irving  
Katahdin Forest Mgmt.  
Key Bank  
LandVest Inc.  
Limington Lumber  
Louisiana Pacific  
Maibec Logging  
ND Paper  
Nicols Brothers  
Pingree Associates  
Pixelle Specialty Sol.  
Pleasant River Lumber  
Prentiss & Carlisle  
ReEnergy  
Richard Wing & Son  
Robbins Lumber  
Sappi North America  
Southern Maine Forestry  
Stead Timberlands  
TD Bank  
Timber Resource Group  
Timberstate G.  
Wadsworth Woodlands  
Wagner Forest Mgt.  
Weyerhaeuser

## Testimony opposing LDs 194, 479 and 641

March 15, 2021

**Patrick Strauch, Executive Director**

Senator Luchini, Representative Caizzo, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am Patrick Strauch, executive director of the Maine Forest Products Council. Since 1961, MFPC has represented the broad spectrum of our state's diverse forest products community, including logging contractors, sawmills, pulp and paper mills, biomass energy facilities, pellet manufacturers, furniture manufacturers, and the owners of more than eight million acres of commercial forestland in Maine.

The Council opposes LDs 194, 479 and 641, because a direct line can be drawn between the spruce budworm outbreak of 1970-85 and efforts to change Maine's timber harvesting laws. The scramble to salvage wood before it was killed or damaged set off alarms with environmental groups. The Legislature passed the Forest Practices Act in 1989 to regulate harvesting, but the limits didn't allay all the concerns and three referendums on clearcutting were fiercely debated in 1996, 1997 and 2000. All were defeated, thanks to an industrywide effort, including businesses based outside the U.S., but with land or assets here.

Maine's forest industry is an amalgam of companies from Maine and elsewhere on the globe. The commitments of foreign companies in Maine is a welcome and exciting sign for the future of the industry. SAPPI, Woodland Pulp, Nine Dragons Paper are among the companies that, together with Maine investors, have made capital investments in this state that exceed a billion dollars in recent years. We also are actively marketing Maine to innovative companies in other parts of the world seeking new uses for wood. These organizations have an important responsibility to protect their investments from referendums like those in the past that threatened wood fiber supply for land managers and wood manufacturers alike.

The Bill of Rights protects freedom of speech for all people regardless of status or nationality. The Supreme Court also has ruled<sup>1</sup> that the government cannot prevent corporations and unions from spending money to express their views in political elections.

Democracy depends on free speech to allow the open exchange of ideas by those who are affected by policy decisions. Restricting an open public policy debate could deprive decision makers -- legislators or referendum voters -- from information and perspectives that are relevant to the decision. That is unfair to those excluded and contrary to constitutional principles of free speech and democracy.

Businesses with assets, including land, in Maine deserve the right to make their opinions known about issues and decisions that will affect them.

These bills also could be a deterrent to businesses that are considering investing in facilities here. We urge you to vote Ought Not To Pass

Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fec.gov/legal-resources/court-cases/citizens-united-v-fec/>