



Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Support of LD 652

“An Act to Allow the Reinstatement of Certain Commercial Driver’s Licenses”

March 14, 2023

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams and members of the Committee Transportation, my name is Patrick Strauch and I am here on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council in support of LD 652, “An Act to Allow the Reinstatement of Certain Commercial Driver’s Licenses.”

The Council is supportive of Senator Jackson’s bill because nearly every aspect of our supply chain relies on CDL drivers, whether it’s to haul fiber from the forest to our mills, or from our mills to the next destinations. Truckers and haulers are a critical component of our industry, and the CDL driver shortage is having a growing impact on our industry’s ability to diversify and grow.

Over the last five years, the Council has been actively involved with a project called FOR/Maine. FOR/Maine is a collaboration of industry partners, trade associations, government agencies at both the state and federal level and the University of Maine System. Together, we have worked to diversify and strengthen our industry by identifying investment opportunities and recruiting new businesses to our state, and by funding important research and studies.

We continue to prioritize this work to build a resilient and healthy industry for the future, and to this point, we have been largely successful in our collaborative efforts. From February of 2021 to November of 2022, private businesses announced investments totaling more than \$1 billion dollars, and a recent study has shown that market timber volumes have recovered to levels higher than before the Pixelle digester explosion and global pandemic injected uncertainty into the market.

This is a huge success, and it’s great news for Maine, however, our industry still faces significant challenges with workforce replacement and retention, especially in the trucking/hauling sector. Currently, our mills are screaming for inventory, but the shortage of loggers and haulers has created a bottleneck that needs to be addressed. LD 652 provides a potential solution to a problem that has only grown worse since the legalization of marijuana a few years ago. We feel that it is reasonable to allow for former CDL license holders to petition the Secretary of State for a review and reinstatement of that license for good cause shown.

All Maine industries and consumers rely on a healthy trucking industry. LD 652 addresses a real problem with a commonsense solution. Please consider supporting it.

Thank you.

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