# Maine Forest Products Council

*The voice of Maine's forest economy*

## Testimony in Support of LD 2063
## "An Act To Clarify the Laws Governing Disclosure of Wood Processing Data"

January 8, 2024
Krysta West, Deputy Director

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I'm Krysta West, the Deputy Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. I am here before you today to testify in support of LD 2063, "An Act Clarify the Laws Governing Disclosure of Wood Processing Data."

The Maine Forest Service collects information from individual mills that process roundwood in Maine that includes volumes, species, types of wood products, origin of wood and other personally identifiable information. By necessity, this information is kept confidential from the public to protect proprietary information in a highly competitive wood purchasing environment. LD 2063 would allow the Maine Forest Service to enter into a confidentiality agreement with the USDA to share this information while still protecting the anonymity of individual facilities by limiting public disclosure to aggregate data.

As a Council, we appreciate the importance of access to good data in understanding overall wood product markets for public policy discussions, and we see the benefit of Maine's data being included in the USDA's Timber Products Output program. Allowing the MFS to share this information will create efficiency for wood processors in Maine while ensuring the consistent reporting of pertinent data.

LD 2063 would allow for this data sharing while still protecting the proprietary information of individual mills, including procurement patterns and operations. Wood in Maine is not simply procured in a region encircling the mill, but by a network of concentration yards and transportation hubs throughout the state.

The MFS has been a good steward of this data, aggregating information under the confidentiality provisions of the law, and the arrangement outlined in LD 2063 is similar to one that already exists between the MFS and USDA for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program. For these reasons, as an industry we are comfortable with their maintenance of confidentiality standards when sharing data with the U.S. Forest Service under the provisions of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.