Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

Testimony in Opposition to LD 1664

"An Act to Repeal the Dirigo Incentives Program"

April 24, 2025
Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development. I'm Patrick Strauch of Exeter, Maine. I'm here testifying today as the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council in opposition to LD 1664.

For 65 years, the Maine Forest Products Council has served as the voice of Maine's forest economy, representing more than 300 members from all facets of the forest products industry. Our members include pulp and paper mills, sawmills, secondary wood processors, foresters, loggers and truckers. We also represent commercial landowners sustainably managing more than 8 million acres of forestland.

MFPC was supportive of the creation of the Dirigo Incentives Program in 2023, and we are opposed to its elimination. Maine's wood products sector has several companies enrolled in this recently established program. We think it is important to maintain consistency in business incentive programs to encourage additional capital investments and employee training programs.

Maine's forest economy and our businesses and employees represent an $8 billion contribution to the State of Maine. It is likely a current study of Maine's Forest Economy will demonstrate a dip in production and economic contribution because of COVID recovery and the loss of the Jay pulp and papermill. Incentives to continue investing in capital and workforce development are even more important during this time. The industry is very capital intensive and as we usher in a diversifying wood-based economy, programs like the Dirigo Business Incentive Program are critically important.

For these reasons we are opposed to the elimination of the Dirigo Tax Incentive program and encourage others to support its importance by voting 'out not to pass'. Thank you for your consideration.