



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 LD 553 An Act To End At-Will Employment

Patrick Strauch, Executive Director

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and distinguished members of the Labor and Housing Committee. I am Patrick Strauch from Exeter, Maine, and the Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC). I represent Maine's forest product industry, which represent more than \$8 billion in economic contribution to the state's economy, and more than 33,000 direct and indirect jobs.

MFPC strongly opposes LD 553 because it represents a major shift in employment policy and will increase the cost of doing business at a time when many industries, including the forest economy, are trying hard to attract new investment in Maine.

Since Maine is now an "employment-at-will" state, both employees and employers have the right to terminate their employment relationship with the other at any time and for any reason, unless a law or agreement, provides otherwise.

Under Maine law employees have protections through the Maine Human Rights Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Whistle Blowers' Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, there are protections found under the National Labor Relations Act and the federal Civil Rights Act.

Like many Maine industries, we are trying to recover from the effects of a COVID pandemic and working hard to promote growth and attract investment, especially through Maine's Forest Opportunity Roadmap (<https://formaine.org/>). Research in Phase I identified the global wood products,

To be successful we need to overcome indicators that show Maine already struggles to show that it's a good place to do business. For example, when it came to rankings for economy in the recent 2021 "Best States" report by U.S. News & World Report, Maine was the lowest-ranking state in New England, and one of the lowest in the east.

This legislation suggests making a seismic change in employment law as we struggle to rebuild our forest economy. We believe the relationship among workers and employers in our industry is positive and fair. We cannot afford to be an outlier in our employment practices from the 48 other states in the U.S. Please don't send a message to investors and employers that our state wants to make it harder for them to do business.

The Council urges you to **vote ought not to pass on LD 553.**

Thank you for your consideration.