



Testimony in Opposition to LD 993

An Act to Facilitate Stakeholder Input Regarding Forest Policy in Maine

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and esteemed members of the committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Anthony Hourihan and I represent Irving Woodlands and I am here to speak in opposition to LD 993.

Irving Woodlands owns and manages close to 1.3 million acres of forest land in the State, and we have been landowners in the State since 1946. To date we have planted more than 79 million trees in the State, and we supply more than 14 different mills off the land base. The management of these land falls to the 25 professional foresters on staff in Maine and with assistance from a naturalist and a wildlife biologist.

Irving agrees that stakeholder input on forestry is important but believes the board that LD 993 would form is not required and is a duplication of what exists today. We are also concerned that the advisory board takes forest policy from the hands of the professionals in the different state agencies that depend on the best science to form policy and moves it into a more political venue, where the State agencies involved have a non-voting role.

There are currently many opportunities that facilitate input and an opportunity to influence policy and operations, if you look at Irving Woodlands as an example:

- Irving Woodlands has 2 stakeholder advisory groups that meet with foresters twice per year. These groups include local representatives of State agencies, Guides, Camp Owners, local citizens, fish and game clubs, as well as members of local clubs.
- Irving funds a Forest Research Advisory Committee (FRAC) that determines areas of concern related to forest management and directs research in to these area to determine impacts and recommend changes to management practices. This group has professors, grad students and different experts from varying fields. All research is peer reviewed by third parties, and published.
- As a participant in Maine's Outcome Based Forestry program Irving is required to demonstrate they are considering and managing for 8 Key Criterion, including Public accountability. This includes publishing Third party certification results, and participation requires that the Governor appointed Technical Review Committee visit the landowners operations at least twice per year, and prepare a report to this committee.

- Irving participates actively in the Cooperative Forest Research Unit at the University of Maine that undertakes research on issues associated with forest management, and changes management strategies based on ever evolving best practices.
- Irving maintains third party certification from 3 entities that audit forest management annually and the Maine Forest Service participates in those audits to insure all laws, rules and best practices are followed.
- There are also many consultations and joint work with Maine Natural Areas Program, IF&W, Forest Service, and BPL each year.

In summary we are very concerned that changing the way policy is implemented today, with the Legislature setting broad policy, and agencies writing rules and refining on the ground standards with input from outside experts will be replaced with a system that moves away from utilizing the professionals in the State agencies.

Thank you for your time today, and I would ask once again to vote ought not to pass on LD 993.

Anthony Hourihan
Irving Woodlands