Maine Forest Products Council

The voice of Maine's forest economy

In Support of LD 2144

"Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries"

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Krysta West, Executive Director

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Strout and distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services My name is Krysta West. I live in Readfield, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Forest Products Council in support of LD 2144, "Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries."

For 65 years, the Maine Forest Products Council has served as the voice of Maine's forest economy, representing hundreds of 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.

We appreciate the fact that the sponsor brought forward this bill. Wellness and mental health care are an essential part of a healthy workforce, and we would like to be involved in this issue as it goes forward.

Maine's heritage industries are often low margin, capital intensive, high stress sectors and, in some cases, are isolated and independent work. While we would caution that poor mental health and a lack of wellness can impact any profession, we do appreciate the specific consideration of heritage industries.

Thank you for considering the views of our industry and we are happy to provide any additional information as needed for the work session.