



FOR/Maine Working to Create a Bright Future for Maine’s Forest Economy

Statewide coalition identifying ways to diversify wood products business, seize on innovative market opportunities, and strengthen rural economies

AUGUSTA, Maine — May 15, 2018 — FOR/Maine (Forest Opportunity Roadmap), formerly known as the Maine Forest Economy Growth Initiative, is pleased to announce significant progress in an ambitious effort to diversify the state’s wood products businesses, attract capital investments, and develop greater economic prosperity for communities impacted by recent mill closures.

“Maine has a vibrant and diverse supply chain that can support new forest industry revenue streams and high-quality jobs in rural areas,” says Yellow Light Breen, President and CEO of the Maine Development Foundation. “We are exploring ways to continue to grow existing businesses, and also produce new bio-based forest products for both domestic and global markets. Sustainable working forests are a tremendous asset for Maine and a pillar of community and business opportunity here.”

FOR/Maine is convening scores of industry, community, research, investment and government stakeholders to conduct coordinated research, formulate strategy, and harness extensive global expertise as part of a long-term, U.S. Economic Development Administration-backed effort to strengthen Maine’s \$8.5-billion, 33,000-job forest economy and position the state as a leader in emerging global forest product markets. Among the reports FOR/Maine will release by year’s end are:

- A global market analysis aimed at identifying current and emerging global demand for forest products, and the markets where Maine is likely to be most competitive. This will also enable FOR Maine to identify the necessary policy and industry changes to keep Maine forest products competitive.
- A wood supply analysis aimed at determining Maine’s current and potential wood supply and how it can meet global demands.
- A Forest Economy Strategic Plan that will identify the global forest products markets Maine can best compete in and the actions necessary to create a more diverse forest economy and increase our economic output.

FOR/Maine is also working closely with leadership in forest communities, including the six towns in Maine that have had mills close in recent years. The coalition is actively involved in efforts to diversify economic opportunities for these communities, supporting efforts to redevelop mill sites, provide more resources for brownfield cleanup and improve broadband access in rural areas.

This effort builds on signs of optimism and significant investment in the future of Maine's forest industry, including Sappi's \$165-million upgrade of a paper machine at its Somerset Mill in Skowhegan, Verso Corporation's \$17-million upgrade of a paper machine at the Androscoggin Mill in Jay, a \$12 million expansion at Pleasant River Lumber's sawmill in Dover Foxcroft, and the announcement that two CLT (cross laminated timber) plants will soon be built in Maine. These projects bring hundreds of jobs to rural communities.

As technology, globalization, and evolving social trends bring change to Maine's traditional forest economy, Maine is adapting and diversifying. In addition to traditional products that will continue to be a strength for Maine - such as saw logs and packaging papers - other outputs can be made into a staggering array of products: packaging and advanced building materials, eco-friendly chemicals and biodegradable plastics (replacing harmful petro-chemicals), textiles, and cutting-edge medical and technical products made of nanocellulose.

"One in every 24 working Mainers make their living as part of the forest economy," says Patrick Strauch, Executive Director of the Maine Forest Products Council. "This includes multi-generation logging families, millworkers, managers with pulp and paper companies, Ph.Ds. involved in corporate and academic research and development projects, wildlife biologists, and investors, just to name a few. These individuals help form the backbone of Maine communities. They are proud of our forest heritage and are dedicated to a bright future for the forest economy."

FOR/Maine has identified several Maine businesses and community members who are playing an active role in ensuring a future for the forest economy. If you would like to contact the subject matter experts associated with the following storylines below, or to arrange an interview with any of the FOR/Maine members, Coalition chairs Patrick Strauch or Yellow Light Breen, please contact Claire Jeffers/Kathy Shannon.

- Revolutionary Research Paving the Way for Maine's Second Golden Age of Forestry
- A Mill Town Finds a New Path Forward

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ABOUT FOR/MAINE

FOR/MAINE is a unique cross-sector collaboration between industry, communities, government, education, and non-profits, which have come together to realize the next generation of Maine's great forest economy. The coalition is supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the

U.S. Department of Agriculture and was created to assess Maine's current industry, assets and readiness and determine a strategy to capitalize on new opportunities. FOR/Maine is combining collaborative actions, innovation, market and resource management expertise, and reliable data to guide smart and successful investment and market expansion in the forest economy. For more information, please visit: www.mdf.org/formaine and follow: www.facebook.com/ForestOpportunityRoadmapME