

INTRODUCTION

FOR/Maine is a unique cross-sector collaboration between industry, communities, government, education, and nonprofits that have come together to ensure that Maine strategically adapts and capitalizes on changing markets, to maintain our leading role in the global forest economy, and support prosperity in our state. As one component of the organization’s work, FOR/Maine commissioned public polling, which provides helpful insights into how the public views Maine’s forest industry.

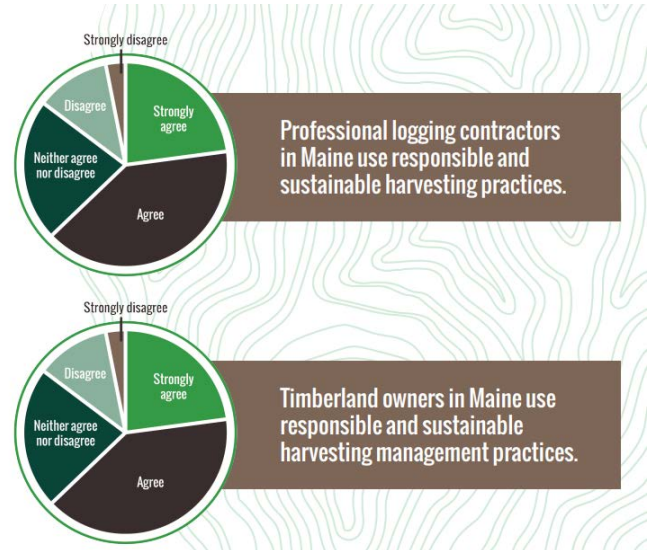
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The survey, conducted online using nearly 500 residents from around the state, was designed to understand the public’s views on the reputation, optimism for, and awareness of the state’s forest products industry.

The survey asked a number of detailed questions, and found that Maine residents view the forest products industry’s:

- Reputation as high,
- Have a medium level of optimism for the industry’s future, and
- Awareness of opportunities for growth and diversification are low.

Some specific questions asked addressed whether the public thought loggers and landowners (asked individually) used responsible and sustainable harvesting / management practices. The good news is that the majority of respondents agreed that harvesting and forest management are sustainable, though it is interesting to notice that the responses when asked about loggers and landowners are nearly identical, suggesting (perhaps) that members of the public do not distinguish between the actions of these two sectors of our industry.



Survey respondents were also asked if they would encourage a student to explore a career in the forest industry. Over three-quarters of respondents said yes, highlighting the public support for the future of the industry.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

A presentation on the public survey, including responses and detailed messaging suggestions, can be found at <https://formaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ForME-Survey-Insight-2021.pdf>

COMMENT

While obviously focused on Maine, this survey could serve as a template for similar work in other states and regions. Additionally, some of the messaging recommendations for how the industry can communicate with the public are universal and can be utilized by companies and associations to better communicate information about the forest industry.