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FRA Applauds Senators King and Risch's Leadership As They Introduce a Bipartisan Bill to Bolster Our Rural Forestry Workforce, the "Jobs in the Woods Act."

FRA is grateful to U.S. Senators Angus King (I-ME) and Jim Risch (R-ID), co-chairs of the Senate Working Forests Caucus, for introducing the bipartisan "Jobs in the Woods Act." This critical legislation is set to enhance employment and engagement in the forest industry, focusing on rural forest-based economies. The Act aims to establish a grant program, fostering skill development and training initiatives to empower the forest products workforce, ultimately benefitting careers with the U.S. Forest Service and timber industries.

*"Senator King underscores the importance of equipping the forestry workforce with necessary training and skills to responsibly manage forests and bolster local economies, **said Deb Hawkinson, FRA President.** The "Jobs in the Woods Act" will make substantial investments to support innovative workforce programs, ensuring quality job opportunities for Maine's residents and securing the future of the state's timber industry."*

*"Senator Risch emphasizes the significance of maintaining a skilled forestry workforce for Idaho's forest and economic well-being, **said Keith Gray, FRA President-elect.** The Act empowers rural communities to develop educational and training programs, ensuring the effective management of forests and the prevention of catastrophic wildfires in the years to come."*

FRA Members Statements

*"Maine landowners rely upon a well-trained workforce to harvest timber and move it to market," **said Dan Lamontagne, President and CEO of Seven Islands Land Company.** "Seven Islands Land Company strongly supports the Jobs in the Woods Act, which will provide workforce development opportunities across the forest industry, and help students transition into rewarding forest-based careers in rural, timber-centric communities across the state. Thank you to Senator King for his leadership on this issue, which is so important in Maine and across the country."*

*"Like other parts of the country, Maine is experiencing labor shortages in the forest product industry," **said Ryan McAvoy, a Sappi North American Wood Procurement Region Manager.** "We have challenges filling jobs from the stump to finished product, and we need help educating, training and bringing younger people into our workforce. The Jobs in the Woods Act would greatly assist in developing and sustaining a viable workforce for the forest products industry here in Maine, as well as other states around the country."*

The *Jobs in the Woods Act* is cosponsored by Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.).

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The Forest Resources Association (FRA) is an association representing the interests of more than 350 organizations and businesses in the forest products industry, including forest landowners, suppliers, consuming mills, associated businesses, and state forestry associations. Members all share a common interest – they rely on FRA to promote the public policy interests of the forest products industry's supply chain on Capitol Hill and our work to advance safety, operational and technical efficiencies, and supply chain relations. FRA has member representation in 49 states and 384 Congressional Districts.