

POLICY ISSUE BRIEF



FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

JOBS IN THE WOODS ACT

S.1336, H.R.4575

Sponsors: Senator Angus King (I-ME)

Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-03)



BACKGROUND

The forest products industry, including loggers and haulers, primary and secondary manufacturers, pulp and paper mills, paper packing plants, and paper facilities, is one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the U.S., sustaining nearly 926,000 families and contributing \$353 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Mill labor shortages are limiting modernization and growth investments in existing and new manufacturing facilities, and the labor pool in the logging sector is aging rapidly. Less than 25% of logging business owners are under 40, 55 is the average age of owners/operators, and approximately 30% of owners/operators are planning to leave the business within five years.

Targeted workforce education and training programs have been effective recruitment tools in computer programming, utility vegetation management, and automotive industries. Regional forest industry training hubs would allow participants to stay in or near their communities, reducing participation costs and afford program developers increased flexibility in adapting training curricula to meet regional needs through ties to local forest product employers. The forestry sector industry struggles to find a trained and skilled workforce at all levels, as an estimated 40-60 percent of young adults are leaving rural forest-based economies for employment opportunities.

The Jobs in the Woods Act would create a grant program for nonprofit organizations, state governments, and colleges to utilize workforce training in forestry-related fields – helping prepare students for jobs in the U.S. Forest Service and the timber industry.

The Jobs in the Woods Act would:

- Establish a competitive grant program to make grants to eligible entities to carry out career pathway training programs in eligible areas with respect to forestry operations and forestry products industries.
- Create programs in rural and low-income areas to spur economic development, bringing thousands of dollars of investment into our rural communities.
- Create a pool of talented, trained, and qualified applicants to fill timber industry job openings, helping Americans obtain quality jobs to serve and responsibly manage our forest and secure our wood supply chain.
- Partner with programs that have proven to help students achieve forestry industry jobs and programs that engage with their local communities.

REQUEST



Cosponsor the bipartisan **Jobs in the Woods Act, S.1336**, introduced by Senators King (I-ME) and Risch (R-ID), and **H.R.4575**, introduced by Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-03) and David Rouzer (R-NC-07).

Original Senate Cosponsors include: Mike Crapo (R-ID), Susan Collins (R-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN)

Original House Cosponsors include: Reps. Pete Stauber (R-MN-08), Chellie Pingree (D-ME-01), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01), and Glenn Thompson (R-PA-15).

WHY THE JOBS IN THE WOODS ACT MATTERS

- Addresses the labor shortage impacting forestry and forestry-related industries.
- Provides grants to existing or establishing workforce and training programs.
- Provides workforce training opportunities to inspire the next generation of forestry workers.
- Prepares students for employment in the forestry sector.
- Targets workforce training for young adults in rural areas and creates career pathway opportunities in the forestry sector.
- Pathway programs allow for immediate job placement.
- Provides young adults a chance to establish a career in the communities where they were raised.
- Sixty-six forestry associations across the U.S. support the legislation.

ABOUT FRA

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) is the only national organization representing all sectors of the wood supply chain. It advocates for its members on federal policy, supply chain relations, and forest operations. FRA members are represented in 49 states and 384 congressional districts.

For more information, please contact:

Tim O'Hara, FRA President, 218-390-7965 or tohara@forestresources.org