

# 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, and paper packaging facilities—is one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the United States. It sustains nearly 935,000 families and contributes \$435 billion annually to the national economy. Yet, mill labor shortages are limiting modernization and investment in existing and new facilities, while the logging workforce is aging rapidly. Fewer than one in four logging business owners are under 40; the average owner/operator is 55, and roughly 30 percent plan to leave the business within the next five years. Rural forest-based communities are also losing much of their next generation, with an estimated 40–60 percent of young adults leaving for other employment opportunities.

To address these challenges, regional forest industry training hubs would enable participants to remain in or near their communities, lowering costs and allowing curricula to be tailored to local needs through partnerships with area forest products employers. Targeted workforce education and training programs have been effective recruitment tools in computer programming, utility vegetation management, and the automotive industries.

The Jobs in the Woods Act would make this possible by creating a grant program for nonprofit organizations, state governments, and colleges to provide workforce training in forestry-related fields, preparing students for careers across the wood supply chain.

#### 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 forests 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, H.R.4575)**

### WHY THE JOBS IN THE WOODS ACT MATTERS

- Addresses the labor shortage impacting forestry and related industries.
- Provides grants to support existing and new forestry workforce 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.
- Has the support of more than 70 forestry associations across the U.S.

### 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:

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