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New Legislation Supports Maine Wood Banks Topsham, Maine — July 7, 2025

On May 30, 2025, Governor Janet Mills signed into law LD 1525, a new bill that strengthens Maine's ability to support community firewood banks. The legislation gives the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Forestry the option to donate timber to firewood banks, and requires the Bureau to promote the development and public awareness of these critical community resources.

The bill was introduced by Representative Mike Ray, a longtime volunteer with the Waldo County Woodshed. "Helping neighbors is what we do here in Maine, and wood banks certainly do that by providing much-needed fuel assistance," said Ray. "Winters are cold, times are tough, and people step up. This bill makes it a bit easier for volunteers to help their neighbors while enjoying all the benefits of another traditional activity—schlepping firewood from here to there. It allows the State to both donate firewood to existing wood banks, as well as encourage the formation of new ones."

Representative Melanie Sachs of Freeport, House Chair of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee, co-sponsored the bill. "I am proud to support this important legislation, as community wood banks fill a critical need in our state," said Sachs. "Fifty percent of Maine households use firewood as a source of heat, and wood banks can be the difference between staying warm or struggling in a cold home."

Maine Wood Banks, a newly formed nonprofit dedicated to eliminating fuel insecurity through the expansion of a statewide wood bank network was grateful for the state support of outreach efforts and wood supplies provided in the passage of LD 1525. Founders of the organization testified in support of the bill and answered many questions about the structure and operations of firewood banks. Currently, there are 15 wood banks operating across Maine, primarily in coastal communities. Maine Wood Banks aims to grow that number by providing administrative support, technical expertise, and tools to help more communities develop local programs to support their neighbors.

The nonprofit's mission is to eliminate fuel insecurity in Maine by improving access to firewood for people in need, fostering strong community partnerships, and mobilizing public support through renewable resource stewardship.

For more information, visit www.woodbanks.org and fill out the contact form, or call 207-747-2868 ext. 5