

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

September 6, 2024

The Honorable Chris Saunders
Federal Co-Chairman
Northern Border Regional Commission
James Cleveland Federal Building, Ste 1501
53 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Mr. Rich Grogan
Executive Director
Northern Border Regional Commission
James Cleveland Federal Building, Ste 501
53 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Saunders and Mr. Grogan:

I write in support of the Maine TREE Foundation's request to the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Forest Economy Program for funding to support its "Scaling the Forestry Immersion Program."

If awarded, funding will be used to expand Maine TREE Foundation's unique program for high school students that provides hands-on learning opportunities for them to acquire essential life and technical skills while fully immersed in the forest, preparing them for rewarding careers in the forest-based economy.

The Forestry Immersion Program has a proven track record of success, providing practical education and bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application. The program not only provides students with the skills needed to contribute to a thriving forest economy, but also instills confidence and leadership skills in participants while offering a stipend they are proud to have earned at the end of the summer. In the past two years, 26 students have completed the program, one of whom has already entered the forest workforce. An additional 70% are interested in pursuing forest-based careers upon graduation.

The Forestry Immersion Program not only benefits participating students and strengthens one of Maine's heritage industries and promotes sustainable forestry practices, but also supports the workforce of Maine communities. Thank you for your consideration of this application, consistent with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Please notify Deidre Grant in my Bangor office at (207) 945-0417 when a decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator