



Finland, Maine and Michigan partner toward sustainable growth in forest bioeconomy

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LANSING, Mich. (WLUC) - In a move that capitalizes on collective forestry knowledge and a commitment to smarter, sustainable use of natural resources, Finland and the states of Maine and Michigan are elevating a cooperative effort in bioeconomy and clean technologies. This week, the team will host a webinar to introduce the formation of working groups open to those in industry, research and governmental sectors.

Maine and Michigan, like Finland, are heavily wooded states with long traditions in the forest industry. All three see great opportunities in working together in the transition toward a modern, sustainable bioeconomy that supports growth while protecting long-term forest health. The cooperation provides many opportunities for companies and researchers on both sides of the Atlantic, and it's an effort that is moving forward at a fast pace.

On Wednesday, Dec. 9, Finland, Maine and Michigan will host a webinar to launch working groups in key sectors of the bioeconomy. The aim for the working groups is to act as platforms for joint U.S.-Finland research, development and innovation projects.

Launch event: Finland and U.S. cooperation in bioeconomy - 8:45-9:30 a.m. (Eastern)/15:45-16:30 (FI)

Networking Webinar: The success factors of bioeconomy and forestry - 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (Eastern)/16:30-20:30 (FI)

"It is absolutely brilliant that we have a cooperation model and industry working group activities between Finland and the states of Maine and Michigan," said Business Finland's Director General Nina Kopola. "These working groups will help to identify joint projects and innovation exchanges aiming towards the expansion of sustainable bioeconomy, and this is exactly the right direction to go."

The working groups will be open to companies, education and research organizations, and industry interest groups. In the virtual launch event, bioeconomy and forestry leaders will have an opportunity to showcase their activities and create new networks.

"I am very pleased about the strengthening of bioeconomy cooperation between Finland and the United States. Cooperation will bring growth to the bioeconomy while producing sustainable solutions to mitigate climate change and safeguard biodiversity," said Minister Jari Leppä of Finland's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. "The expertise and infrastructures in research also complement each other.

The cooperation is based on Memorandums of Understanding that Finland has signed with the states of Maine and Michigan. At the center of these partnerships are sectors that share similar interests, as well as opportunities to pool expertise and collaborate on bio- and circular economies and clean technologies.

"The province of North Karelia has tremendous expertise and a well-functioning cooperation model that creates solutions for many challenges, also internationally," said Katja Väyrynen, education expert of Riveria and specialist in Edupark. "Our network values the development of education, business-institution-research cooperation in ensuring the know-how for future, and the

development and implementation of technologies. We train responsible experts and developers for the future – all together.”

The launch event, organized by Team Finland and partners, brings together speakers from all over Finland, Maine and Michigan. The event is co-organized with the Eastern Finland region, which hosts a hub of expertise in both research and business within the forestry and bioeconomy sectors.

“Michigan’s creative collaboration with Finland will build on our longstanding, shared heritage and enable us to work together to create new opportunities in the sustainable forest bioeconomy,” said Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. “Not only will this partnership allow us to share knowledge and expand markets, but it has the potential to mitigate climate change. I want to thank leaders in Finland and Michigan who have made this collaboration possible.”

“These working groups will leverage the culture, insights, strengths and resources of Finland and Maine to strengthen our respective bioeconomies, advance innovative wood construction like Cross Laminated Timber, and enhance the health and sustainability of our forests in the face of a changing climate,” said Maine Governor Janet Mills. “I look forward to our continuing conversations and the results of our shared efforts to build a greener future based on trade, investment, research and development and commercial activity between our regions.”

As a result of the enhanced cooperation, officials in Finland, Maine and Michigan hope to access research and innovation funding in Finland (Business Finland Co-Creation, Co-Innovation) and the U.S. from both state and federal level programs.

Source: <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2020/12/08/finland-maine-and-michigan-partner-toward-sustainable-growth-in-forest-bioeconomy/>