



# Maine Coast Heritage Trust

*A Statewide Land Conservation Organization*

## **Testimony in Support of LD 1679: An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change**

Senator Carson, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Jeff Romano. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Maine Coast Heritage Trust in support of LD 1679.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust conserves and stewards Maine's coastal lands and islands for their renowned scenic beauty, ecological value, outdoor recreational opportunities, and contribution to community well-being. We provide statewide conservation leadership through our work with land trusts, coastal communities and other partners. Over the past four decades, we have conserved 327 islands and more than 150,000 acres in Maine.

LD 1679 is thoughtful response to the challenges posed by climate change. It provides Maine with a solid framework for both addressing our state's contributions to carbon emissions as well as ensuring our communities have the tools necessary to adapt to the effects that are likely to occur with greater frequency as the climate continues to change in the future.

As an organization that has been committed to the protection of the Maine coast for nearly five decades, MCHT is especially concerned with the long-term health of our state's coastline, marine economies, and coastal communities. Unfortunately, our changing climate is leading to rising sea levels, warmer waters, changing ocean chemistry, species shifts and higher storm surges – all posing serious threats to the long-term health of Maine's coast. These and other changes demand a thoughtful and well-coordinated response.

Rising sea level is an issue MCHT has been focused on with increased attention. In recent years, we have devoted significant resources to the issue of marsh migration and have amended our land protection strategies accordingly. For example, we have identified areas along the coast where existing marshes have room to move inland as sea level rises and have begun to work with local communities to ensure those marshes are able to migrate over time. The ability of the Maine coast to sustain productive marshes is key to the long-term success of preserving water quality, sustaining fisheries, and protecting the health of coastal communities from Kittery to Lubec.

LD 1679 would help the state support efforts like our marsh migration work, on Maine's coast and inland. The bill will also identify other public and private sector solutions to address changes likely to occur statewide in the decades to come.

MCHT encourages the committee to unanimously support this legislation.