

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

**JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALL MAINE YOUTH
OUTDOORS**

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts have tremendously strained the mental health and well-being of Maine's youth and our education system, and, in response, schools have overcome challenges related to training, curriculum, space, funding, gear access, transportation and more in order to use exploring and learning outdoors to face these unprecedented physical, social and emotional challenges; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Maine youth were spending less time outdoors exploring, discovering and building connections to Maine's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, it is documented that learning in an outdoor setting improves academic performance, increases motivation to learn and engage and increases student connection to natural resources and the community; and

WHEREAS, outdoor learning and leadership development open career opportunities in Maine's heritage natural resource, outdoor recreation and tourism industries; and

WHEREAS, the future decisions affecting the quality, quantity and use of the State's natural resources will lie in the hands of today's youth, who must understand natural systems and the interrelationships between natural and human-built systems in order to make informed decisions and take actions that will maintain a high quality of life; and

WHEREAS, when the benefits of outdoor experiences are made available to all youth, stronger connections and healthier communities are built and all citizens benefit; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to commend Maine teachers, administrators and school districts for their innovation in using outdoor settings to increase safety for youth and staff and to meet youth physical and mental health needs; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we support opportunities for all Maine youth to enjoy time outdoors to explore and to learn about and build connections to our State's natural resources, which will provide for health and well-being and will build stronger, healthier communities through upholding Maine's deep history of connection to the outdoors.