



Friends of Casco Bay Casco BAYKEEPER

Board of Directors

President
Andrew V. Marsters, *Portland*

Vice President
Kirsten Piacentini, *Cumberland Foreside*

Clerk
Patricia Ianni, *Falmouth*

Treasurer
Malcolm F. Poole, *Scarborough*

Stephen Bushey, *South Portland*
Deborah Debiegun, *Yarmouth*
Ellen Grant, *Portland*
Howard Gray, *Portland*
Mark Green, *Peaks Island*
Megan Hallett, *Falmouth*
George L. Higgins III, *Peaks Island*
David Kaufman, *South Freeport*
Peter C. LeBourdais, *Harpswell*
Sebastian Milardo, *Little Diamond Island*
Joan Benoit Samuelson, *Freeport*

Honorary Directors

Kenneth M. Curtis, *Cape Elizabeth*
Kevin P. Gildart, *Cape Elizabeth*
Anthony R. Jessen, *Freeport*
P. Andrews Nixon, *Brunswick*
Donald W. Perkins, *Cape Elizabeth*
Founding President

Casco BAYKEEPER, Emeritus
Joseph E. Payne, *Westbrook*

Casco BAYKEEPER
Ivy Frignoca, *Cumberland*

Executive Director
Will Everitt, *Portland*

May 22, 2023

Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1969, An Act to Expand the Use of Funds to Support Land Conservation

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Friends of Casco Bay submits this testimony in support of LD 1969, An Act to Expand the Use of Funds to Support Land Conservation, and respectfully requests that the Committee vote Ought to Pass. LD 1969 will continue to carry forth the intent of Land for Maine's Future (LMF) fund, established in 1987, and will strengthen its efficacy by ensuring it is adequately funded.

For over 30 years, Friends of Casco Bay has worked to improve and protect water quality in Casco Bay and its watershed. We monitor the health of the Bay, and use that data to inform our advocacy and engage our communities in efforts to protect the health of our watershed and coastal waters.

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to Casco Bay. We have been strong advocates for laws and policies that conserve valuable marshes and other coastal habitats necessary to sustain marine life, provide carbon storage to reduce our carbon footprint, and serve as buffers from storm surges and sea level rise. We are also supportive of protecting our working waterfront and promoting the survival of our rich maritime economy.

LMF funds have been critical to conserving lands that border Casco Bay and preserving public and commercial access to the waterfront. For example, LMF funds financed the purchase of .77 acres at Holbrook's Wharf in Harpswell. For three years we have maintained a continuous monitoring station off that wharf that collects data every fifteen minutes of every day, and will continue to do so for many years into the future. These data allow us to track changes in water chemistry, including, but not limited to, temperature, salinity, pH, and the amount of calcium carbonate available for shell formation. There are few public access places in eastern Casco Bay where we can monitor water quality, so this site is critically important to our work. Moreover, the wharf is a vital and busy community hub, where we often see lobstermen, tourists and locals.

LMF funds also purchased public land at Mere Point in Brunswick, which allows deep water boat launching and recreational use. We monitor water quality seasonally at Mere Point, tracking such parameters as algae blooms, dissolved oxygen, and total nitrogen. We frequently see boats launched for fishing or oyster farming, worms digging on the flats, and families enjoying picnics and recreational boating. Again we rely upon this public access to do our own work, which in turn protects the health of the Bay for all users.

LD 1969 will ensure that LMF is funded at sufficient levels for the long term. We must conserve and rely upon our natural resources to help us be resilient to climate change. We must preserve access to those resources to protect Maine's unique way of life.

For the reasons above, we respectfully request the the Committee vote that LD 1969 Ought to Pass. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Kenyon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heather" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kenyon".

Heather Kenyon, Science and Advocacy Associate
Friends of Casco Bay
Cell: (774) 487-9178
hkenyon@cascobay.org