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Honorable Madam's and Sir's

I'm chairman of Eastern Slope Airport Authority, pilot, and business owner. I've been associated with IZG for more than 50 years. It always seems very curious to me that airports such as Portland, Bangor and Presque Isle are constantly mowing, fencing, and doing anything possible to prohibit the incursion of wildlife within the border of the airport. Airports are no different than major highways, and need to be protected as best as can be in order to stop dangerous wildlife impacts from moose, deer, coyotes, turkeys, and anything that can stray in the line of traffic. Even with the precautions taken, there are still fatal accidents that happened on our highways caused by wildlife.

Imagine landing an aircraft at a speed of 80 to 100 kn and impacting a turkey or a coyote that has been looking for mice and small birds at the edge of the runway, or a deer in deep grass that decides to run out in front of your plane, it's scary and very dangerous and has many times taken lives. We're all aware of the flock of birds that Sally hit and put that Boeing down in the Hudson River. It just seems illogical and crazy to protect wildlife, whether endangered or not around an airport that has been designated for the use of air transportation. To enhance nesting and growth of grass, flowers, trees, and shrubs that attract nesting birds, feed and dens for mammals that enjoy the small mice and little critters to feed on is counterproductive, very expensive, and very dangerous. If people want air transportation, then they have to look at the mission of the airport. That mission is to have clear access to the runways day or night, well maintained and lit runways, and a very safe environment for landing and taxing aircraft.

If not for the savings in our precious tax monies that support these airports and are needed to maintain the habitat plans, and environmental restrictions associated with endangered species protection, then think about the safety factors that all of us and our loved ones traveling in aircraft, whether a large commercial jet or a small commuter aircraft that uses the smaller airfields in Maine and the chance of a wildlife strike.

To me, it is just simple logic and good judgment that airports Maine should be exempt from enhancing wildlife and the habitat that attracts this wildlife, in the confines of the property that has been set aside for air transportation. Please approve and pass this bill for the safety of all those who use air, transportation in Maine.