

Re: Opposition to LD 138

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Linda Miller. I live and work in Bridgton, about 13 miles from our regional Eastern Slope Airport and realize its importance to our area. However, I oppose LD 138, An Act to Exempt Airports from Certain State Endangered and Threatened Species Habitat Protections.

I have identified two (2) major issues:

- First and foremost, airports, like any other entity, should comply with the scope and intent of Maine's Endangered Species Act of 1975 by the 107th legislature. This proposed bill will allow for needless harm to endangered and threatened species of plants and wildlife throughout the entire state. In reality, it can potentially nullify the jurisdiction of the Endangered Species Act. Worse, there are no limitations to the scope and extent of an airport tract and it could overtake vital ecological habitats.
- Of great concern, this bill appears to allow for activities that are not commonly associated with aviation. Under this bill, the types of activities exempted from the Endangered Species Act are unlimited.

The guardianship set forth in the Endangered Species Act protects and serves Maine's environmental health and economy well. Our natural heritage, esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational and scientific value is treasured by our Nation and its people. Tourism, our greatest industry, can be harmed without the forethought of the Act's stewardship. Millions of people flock to see the natural wonders and biodiversity of Maine. However, our vital biodiversity depends upon the delicate balance between a built development and undisturbed wildlife habitats.

This bill could allow development that would purposely bypass the Endangered Species Act throughout the state, especially for non-aviation related entities. Activities allowed by this bill should be consistent with Title 30-A, section 540.

Thank you for your consideration. Please oppose LD 138.

Linda K. Miller

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