

Nora Schwarz
Fryeburg resident
LD 138

Greetings Sen. Tepler, Representative Doudera, and ENR Committee Members, My name is Nora Schwarz, I live in Fryeburg, Maine and I am submitting written testimony IN OPPOSITION TO LD 138 "An Act to Exempt Airports from Certain State Endangered and Threatened Species Habitat Protections".

Smaller suburban and rural airports in Maine were developed primarily to provide emergency landing opportunities, and offer designated airfields for LifeFlight and other medical emergencies. Over time they were used increasingly for private planes to deliver residents and visitors who preferred not to drive through our beautiful state to reach their destination offering immediate gratification. Some of these airports saw an increase in freight use, potatoes in particular were no longer trucked but flown to their buyers. The airports were being used more and so they sought development which would allow them to increase their capacity.

It seems that the money collected by the potato farmer, airbnb owner, and the airports themselves has completely eclipsed common sense. Why would you, the officials chosen to protect our environment be swayed by money? Why would you subject the air we (your family, friends) and all living organisms breathe to more toxins from increased numbers of and larger planes.

The Fryeburg Airport Land, ESRA, is Town Land and we residents approve money every year at our Annual Town Meeting for its support. Most of the long term multigenerational families believe it's a safety net for an emergency situation but if they knew that the airport, which sits on an exceptionally beautiful piece of land is home to increasingly endangered, threatened, and rare plant species as well as being a rich habitat for a number of likewise special organisms would they support the persistent desire of a few money focused individuals over it, and our town's degradation? Of course we are concerned too about our water, ESRA sits on an important aquifer, maybe you should consider that the water being exported from this aquifer will not only be less desirable because of the plastic bottles it's sold in, and because of the PFAS from previous sludge applications and manufacturing waste but soon that water will be drawn from an increasingly tainted aquifer... The Habitat Management Plan which was drawn up as a result of ESRA's previous infractions (in 2019 and since) including clearcutting of Pitch Pine Scrub Oak and the resulting deterioration of a very rare Outwash Plain Pond Shore Community is largely ignored. Before their recent bid to increase the runway length for larger planes the DEP stated that there were other healthy environments for the birds and butterflies that were known to call this land home and they agreed to the plan which is destroying another acre of prime wetland, and encroaching on the buffer around that pond. Development of surrounding land, not for airport use, including 40 acres of solar fields to provide money for ESRA's coffers has made these beautiful town lands fenced and locked and unavailable for recreation.

The environmental laws which were adopted since the 1960's have certainly protected, up until recently when the greed outweighs health and wellness, all of us. Why would you change those laws now? Fewer applicable laws will accelerate the downward spiral for our environment NOTHING GOOD WILL COME OF IT and no one can plead they didn't know because ever since these laws protecting the environment were enacted science has continued to provide the evidence demonstrating the horrible results prior to their adoption and what would and will continue to be...the science will prove that money outweighed health and wellness for this generation and all those that come after.

Please vote against any Exemption of Airports from ALL State Endangered and Threatened Species Habitat Protections!