

David Cullinan
Eastern Slope Regional Airport, Fryeburg Maine
LD 138

My name is David Cullinan, and write to ask you to support Maine LD 138. I have worked as Operations Manager at Eastern Slope Regional Airport in Fryeburg, Maine since 1997, and have the unique experience to testify to both how nurturing endangered species and habitat on airport grounds make for more dangerous conditions that affect the safety of the human species, damage property, and impact economic development.

Our airport is tasked with promoting aviation and economic development, making the area more accessible to private pilots, and also as a hub for LifeFlight operations. Safety is of utmost importance, and it is essential to keep the areas adjacent to runways mowed and clear of obstructions that make landing dangerous. These areas and the surrounding perimeters, if preserved as habitats for endangered species, would affect the safety of the human species. As a private pilot, I myself have had a bird strike in an airport environment during takeoff, and I can tell you the experience was devastating. Luckily I was able to return to the airport immediately and no passengers were harmed, but the airplane itself sustained serious damage. I have also personally witnessed many close calls, and I hope to never witness another.

“Protecting” airport grounds for endangered species, and the restrictions to maintaining the grounds that would go along with those protections, encourage species to nest closer to runways. Noise from departures and arrivals startle wildlife that take to flight or run across runways, with potentially serious consequences. I also question the reporting skills and expertise of tenacious birdwatchers on a mission to find and report an endangered species. Being on the grounds on a near daily basis for 28 years, I have seen many of these birdwatchers, but not the species they have reportedly seen.

I believe state and federal resources can be used more effectively, and that increased efforts to nurture endangered species at airports will absolutely make the airport environment more dangerous to the public. I implore you to please support and enact this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,
David Cullinan
Operations Manager
Eastern Slope Regional Airport