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Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

LD 488—An Act to Protect Coastal Property by Allowing Property Owners to Protect Their Existing Dwellings

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Karen Blakelock and I'm a policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to submit written comments in opposition of LD 488.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

In the face of a changing climate that brings with it more frequent and more intense storms, Mainers need proactive and creative policies that bolster resiliency for communities across the state without compromising the very ecosystems that provide natural climate resilience.

Both coastal sand dunes and wetlands offer natural climate resiliency, providing buffer against storms and floods. These benefits can accumulate upstream, protecting against the worst impacts of flooding-- towns with few wetlands within their borders often experience many benefits from wetlands conserved by municipalities downstream.

Despite the benefits, wetlands have been lost at alarming rates across the northeastern United States. Wetlands are highly adaptive ecosystems and if managed well, can keep pace with sea level rise and changing environmental conditions.

Additionally, Maine's coastal sand dunes are under threat. As the Gulf of Maine warms and sea levels rise, coastal communities and ecosystems are seeing increased frequency of flooding and erosion. Both sand dunes and wetlands provide critical habitat for wildlife and help protect buildings and infrastructure from flooding.

I ask that you vote ought not to pass on LD 488. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comment.