

Martha Reeve  
Northport, ME

March 8, 2025

To Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and ENR Committee Members,

I support LD 226 "An Act to Protect the Cultural Resources and Historical Heritage of Sears Island in Searsport by Extending Conservation Easement Protections" and hope it will receive your full endorsement.

Sears Island is a gem to be cherished and protected by the fortunate people of Maine who can claim it as part of their heritage.

Sears Island is a gem that is cherished by the people of nearby communities, as evidenced by the lineup of cars along the causeway, heaviest in summer, but there all year long. Residents of the area, as well as visitors, love this island, often depending on it for their health and mental well-being on, as well as the economic boost of eco-visitors. This publicly-accessible, undeveloped island with mature forest and meadows and a varied, geologically-interesting shoreline is unique – an asset to take pride in, not to devastate.

Sears Island is a gem that is cherished by wildlife. Its forests, meadows and vernal pools are home to many animals, from amphibians and butterflies to a renowned assortment of birds. All of these animal species are already dwindling in number globally due to widespread destruction of the habitats they depend on. These fascinating neighbors and their services to our own habitat are assets to celebrate, not to insult by industrializing their homes.

Sears Island is a gem that is cherished by fish and marine mammals of the surrounding waters. Pogies and seals live in the waters, clams are cared for and harvested in the shallows, and salmon, sturgeon, and eels swim by on their way up the Penobscot River. Clean waters and undeveloped shores that support abundant marine life are rare, even in Maine. We (that's me, a taxpayer) show our reverence for migratory fish by spending millions of dollars to improve their habitat upstream. It is foolish to follow these expensive, long-term investments by allowing degradation of their habitat downstream.

Ostensibly two-thirds of the island is "preserved." Do not fool yourself; a large industrial development on Sears Island would have a devastating impact on all of these uses throughout the island and surrounding waters, by people and wildlife. A partial conservation easement is a nod to its value. The local community has dodged development of the island time after time, acknowledging its unique natural benefits. Please fully acknowledge the special, unique nature of Sears Island and its contributions to the region and the State of Maine, once and for all, by fully protecting this coastal gem.

Martha Reeve, Northport, Maine