

Marie LaFontaine Sekera
Eddington
LD 226

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

I am testifying in strong support of LD 226 "An Act to Protect the Cultural Resources and Historical Heritage of Sears Island in Searsport by Extending Conservation Easement Protections" and also LD 735 "An Act to Protect Sand Dunes on Sears Island and to Establish Criteria for Legislation Regarding Land Development,"

Sears Island is a special place worth permanently protecting as an intact island habitat. It is not only a sanctuary for wildlife but for humans. In a time where oceanfront access is diminishing due to development, leaving this island unharmed as the largest remaining one on our coastline and has value beyond money. I ask you to respect the sacredness of this place in maintaining its integrity for generations to come and explore. It is the gateway from Penobscot Bay into the Penobscot River and would help complete the efforts of river restoration that so many organizations, along with Penobscot people, have invested their time and energy to do. Using the already impacted Mack Point as local people are suggesting appears a win-win solution.

The island is a vital recreation place and attraction. It adds so much value to the surrounding towns. I live inland several towns away and the island is the reason I travel to Searsport. I also support local businesses on my way to or from the island to round out our day trips. I would not travel to Searsport for shopping alone although it's an added pleasure. I've enjoyed it with my children for many decades and now with the grandchildren. I just received a phone call yesterday to hear that I am due to be a great grandmother and wish to enjoy it with them too. I am asking for you to please protect this treasure along the Maine coast and also meet the state's climate goals of preserving habitat in tandem. Thank you.

With great hope,

Marie LaFontaine Sekera
Eddington, ME