

13 March 2025

To the members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

I am submitting this written testimony in support of LD 593 to extend critical funding for the Land for Maine's Future program. In 1987, Maine voters overwhelmingly approved a bond to purchase lands of significance for recreation and conservation. For over 30 years, LMF has successfully crossed ideologies, party lines and motivations to represent and protect the essence of Maine. During that time, funding has been invested in more than 250 projects to promote public access, community recreation and engagement, and to protect Maine's natural-resource based economy including farmland.

Putting LMF funds to work for the people of Maine also means funding must be replenished periodically and that time has come again. The needs are there now more than ever as development pressures expand, climate change impacts our coastal areas, and federal funding sources are disappearing. It's up to us to maintain Maine's natural beauty and resources for our people.

As a resident of Scarborough, I see the positive effects LMF funding have had on our town and neighboring Cape Elizabeth, protecting and preserving treasured places like Scarborough and Higgins Beaches and Robinson Woods. I am also a Board member of Scarborough Land Trust (SLT), a local non-profit that has partnered with LMF on at least five projects, including Fuller Farm Preserve, Broadturn Farm, and the future Beaver Brook and Silver Brook preserves—all of which provide vital resources to our local community.

LMF has catalyzed an effective model of partnership over the decades, allowing the resources of local organizations like SLT to stretch further and to attract other sources of funding when there are strong partners at the table. I urge your support for this bill to ensure this important work can continue into the future.

Respectfully,

Christine Labaree  
14 Clearwater Drive  
Scarborough ME 04074  
978-697-8463  
clabaree@gmail.com