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Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
August, ME 04333

March 13, 2025

Re: Support for LD 593 – An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program

Dear Committee Members:

The Trust for Public Land is grateful for the opportunity to provide support for LD 593, An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program.

Trust for Public Land believes that increasing access to the outdoors for all Mainers is part of the foundation for healthy and vibrant communities and is key for sustainable economic growth. Investing in Land for Maine Future will contribute towards our state's climate, health, and economic goals and help ensure that all Mainers can safely spend more time in the outdoors.

It is important to note that conserving land and supporting outdoor recreation is good for the economy, and we should view investments in Land for Maine's Future as a way to further support local economic growth. Conserved areas underpin the \$427 billion US outdoor recreation industry, which represents 2.2% of US GDP and is growing faster than the overall US economy. These trends are even stronger in our state, as outdoor recreation plays twice as large a role in supporting Maine's economy than the national average. Passing LD 593 will ensure that our land and water dependent industries - including outdoor recreation, forestry, farming, and fishing - will receive a much needed investment.

Land conservation is critical to mitigating and preventing some of the greatest impacts of the climate crisis. Research has shown that protecting, restoring and sustainably managing natural ecosystems, including forests and marshes, could account for more than 30% of global action needed to avoid the worst climate



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scenarios. It is essential that land conservation plays an important role in Maine's climate strategy, and it is encouraging that the Climate Action Plan has set the significant target of conserving 30% of Maine's land by 2030. We believe that this is an ambitious but achievable goal that will also deliver public benefits and bolster economic growth. However, it won't be possible to achieve this goal without generating significant funding for land conservation. In order to meet this 30x30 goal, we will need to protect an additional 9 percent of Maine's land, roughly equal to 1.9 million acres, over 10 years. Land for Maine's Future funding is critical to meet the goal.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views and thank the Committee for its attention to these critical issues.

Sincerely,

Betsy Cook
Maine State Director
Trust for Public Land

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. The organization has been working in Maine for more than two decades and has created public access to nearly 200,000 acres across the state from the Eastern Promenade in Portland to Katahdin Lake in Baxter State Park to Tumbledown Mountain and Mt. Blue State Park in Franklin County.