

Testimony of C. Ian Stevenson

In Support of LD1529: An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide

April 12, 2025

Dear Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee:

My name is C. Ian Stevenson, I live on Peaks Island (Portland), and I am a professor of historic preservation and an environmental historian. I am an advocate for Maine's environment for its contribution to our state and all its residents: in its historic value, its economic value (driver of tourism), environmental value, and recreational value. In addition to my academic appreciation of Maine's environmental resources, I am an avid fly fisher who fishes for Maine's native brook trout including in the ponds of the North Woods and an upland bird hunter.

I support LD1529 because:

- Older growth forests once covered roughly 70% of the North Woods and now **make up just 3% of Maine's Unorganized Territories**. Without action, much of what's left will be gone in 35 years.
- Maine's remote, undeveloped ponds support the **last stronghold of native brook trout in the US** and provide rare, quiet places for recreation. Many are already under development pressure.

Ultimately, LD1529 takes a balanced approach to protect these natural resources in directing agencies to create a statewide conservation strategy, improve tracking, and elevate protection through existing programs like Land for Maine's Future and the Land Use Planning Commission's Lake Management Program. It is thus a win-win for all in Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Ian Stevenson', written in a cursive style.

C. Ian Stevenson, PhD