

Written Testimony Opposed to (LD 1529)

From: Matt Stedman

Ashland Maine resident, Licensed Forester w/26 years industrial forestry experience

To: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

Dear Members,

I'm testifying today in opposition to LD 1529. I believe this bill is an over-reach of private property rights for landowners in the state of Maine. Not only does it seek to protect something that most all landowners are protecting today in one form or another, but it also seeks to bypasses current rules/guidelines for reclassification of lakes.

I ask that you all consider: Would you apply such restrictions to your own private property? Not cutting down big trees you had taken the time to grow? Not building a camp on a lake you own frontage on? Only harvesting part of your vegetable garden after all the effort to plant, water & tend it? Not maintain sections of your lawn, not tending to your flower beds, etc. That is your property. Your decision.

Throughout our beautiful state there are sections of forest land, farmland, open space, housing developments, rural and urban areas. This patchwork is what makes Maine unique. This patchwork is because every landowner has different goals & objectives. Not each acre can provide every value, nor should each landowner be held to the same standard.

Landowners already utilize many best practices, guidance documents, regulations and laws (along with their goals and objectives) to manage the forest on their property. Each owner has a different set of objectives and structures within their family/organization/land trust and manages their woodlands as they see fit within current legal guidelines. This creates a diverse mosaic and allows for a forest that is different in many ways without placing undue burden or strictly regulating landowners.

Private landowners in Maine have a rich tradition allowing public access to their property, when will the public stop asking more of landowners OR when will landowners stop allowing the public on their land because they ask too much?

Throughout my 26 years as a professional forester working & recreating in the forest of northern Maine, I have seen multiple landowners implement their own policies across the diverse forest. They use information gleaned through continuing education requirements of their foresters' license, personal experiences and their passion to see the working forest continue to provide multiple values for the communities they live and work in.

I ask that you take this into consideration and oppose LD1529.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matt Stedman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Matthew Stedman (LF3297)