

Written Testimony Opposed to (LD 1529)

From: Ked Coffin

Aroostook County Small Woodlot Owner, Licensed Forester, Industry Employee and Supporter of Private Comprehensive Landscape Sustainability

To: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

Dear Members,

LD 1529 – cry havoc, push hysteria, make legislation, rally the select groups waiting in the wings, develop standards, change standards, protect private landowners from themselves, its not really their land anyways, we can help. Really?

As a private woodlot owner and proud employee of the forest products industry for over 30 years and most importantly as someone who believes in private property rights and whose family is dependent on a healthy thriving and sustainable forest landscape, those thoughts instantly come to mind when I read this proposal. An attack on my rights. Do you want me to tell you how to manage your property with my goals and objectives? Do not tell me how to manage mine.

Fortunately for me personally, as I live and am totally surrounded by the larger working forest, I suspect that my 70-acre woodlot, which does have LSOG characteristics but no lakes will be unworthy of regulatory scrutiny and zoning, not worth the time and money to those that have it and I will be able to manage it, my land, to meet my own sustainability goals that dovetail into the diverse landscape that makes Maine special.

Unfortunately, I suspect the larger private working forest which I love, live in, and depend on will end up being the real and only target for the special interest groups who will and do have the time and money to influence and direct further regulations upon it.

My life's work in the private sector has revolved around forest landscape sustainability. A 3-legged stool, cut any leg off and the stool falls over, a delicate balance, a great responsibility.

I am especially proud of the environmental leg which allows for the protection of multiple long-term habitat values like LSOG. Across the industry and where I work, we have spent over 3 decades developing programs, soliciting input from researchers and experts at places like MNAP, Manomet, CFRU, UMaine with collaboration and input from respected individuals in these fields such as Andy Cutko, Andy Whitman and John Hagan and many others.

With forethought, this science-based collaborative work has led to the development of programs in the private sector, all without the "help" of decades late LD 1529, ensuring that long-term habitats values will remain an important part of the working forest landscape of Maine. Others and I have put those learnings into practice on our own lands.

We are farmers, big and small, our private lands provide the essential crops that feed, shelter, and comfort us, set Maine apart, and the jobs that are the backbone of our communities. If anyone has plans for my land, plan to sit down in my kitchen and have a cup of coffee and we can have a private conversation one on one.

Respectively,

