

I write to urge you to support LD 1529, An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide.

Maine's North Woods comprises the largest undeveloped forest area east of the Mississippi and provides a rare and rich environment for Maine's native plants and wildlife. We need to protect this special area and its inhabitants from random development because once it's gone, it's gone virtually forever. Studies have shown that not all forest characteristics have recovered even 100 years after clear cutting.¹

- 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.
- **LD 1529 takes a balanced approach to protect these natural resources:** It directs 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.²

¹ Edge Effects and the Effective Size of Old-Growth Coast Redwood Preserves, by **Save the Redwoods League** on December 4, 2018 (<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/grant/how-long-it-takes-for-a-forest-to-recover-after-clear-cutting>).

² Luke Frankel, NRCM Woods, Waters, & Wildlife Director, Natural Resources Council of Maine, mailing of April 12, 2025.