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Greetings Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and Honorable ACF Committee Members.

My name is D. Gordon Mott, I live and vote in Lakeville, one of 8 organized towns in LUPC jurisdiction in Penobscot County, ME. I am testifying in support of LD 1529 "An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide".

As a forester I have spent a 71-year career, together with many others and our important public agencies, managing parts of our natural forest and river and lake-related habitats in New England and adjacent New Brunswick to help, on our watch, to keep them for the people of the future. I have been employed by both Canadian Forest Service and US Forest Service and have been in private practice in Maine for 43 years.

Through those 71 years, Maine forests have been affected by two, and now a third spruce budworm outbreak, have experienced the extraordinary revolution in logging and harvesting intensities that reach the farthest corners and altitudes, and have experienced constant increase in development pressure in rural Maine and the North Woods.

In managing and advising hundreds of client landowners, in serving in advisory roles including in the Scientific Forest Management Area in Baxter Park, in founding and providing an area of virgin old-growth forest to our local land trust, and participating in the conservation of properties in this region, I can help to affirm for you how precious the bits of natural old growth forest and undeveloped lakes and ponds in Maine have become. They are rare.

It has been clear through the years that in the priorities that have evolved for Land For Maine's Future acquisitions, the diverse array of needs and desires by a wide spectrum of land users in our population have been included. But these bits of special forests have been omitted. In a very thoughtful and balanced way this proposal adds appropriate requirements for attention to these rare bits that remain.

They are the only places where the natural legacies are to be found of what was here when we first came to these forests that developed after the last ice-age and had been inhabited only by the Wabanaki and affected by natural fire, wind, and natural biological factors. They house and preserve precious unique natural knowledge that we should not allow to be lost to harvesting or neglect.

The inclusion in this bill of conservation attention to the special lakes, and directing the Department of Conservation Agriculture and Forestry to develop a statewide strategy for conservation of late-successional and old-growth forests are to be highly commended.

Please take it that your work and your positive decisions in support of this bill will place you among those who have contributed significantly in Maine's legacy of caring for our natural resources and our people. Serious things are in your few hands.

With thanks and deep appreciation for what you do.

D. Gordon Mott