

Testimony in Support of HP 151 / LD 1724

Resolve, Authorizing the Baxter State Park Authority to Convey Certain Land in Cumberland County

Submitted by James O'Malley

Licensed Forester and SFMA Advisory Committee Member

Fort Kent, Maine

April 25, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and Honorable Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

My name is Jame O'Malley, and I am a licensed forester living in Fort Kent, Maine. I have had the honor of serving on the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) Advisory Committee for Baxter State Park since 2010. I am writing today in support of HP 151 / LD 1724, which authorizes the Baxter State Park Authority to convey a small parcel of land in Cumberland County.

This parcel lies far outside the boundaries of Baxter State Park and has no functional or ecological connection to the Park or the SFMA. As such, it falls outside the scope of the Park's mission, which is focused on preserving the wilderness character and natural resources of the land generously gifted by Governor Baxter.

In my advisory work with the SFMA, I've seen firsthand the importance of aligning land stewardship with mission-driven goals. Retaining ownership of a non-contiguous, unrelated parcel creates administrative challenges and distracts from the Park Authority's core responsibilities. Allowing this conveyance would support better land management outcomes—both for the Park and for the community better positioned to manage and benefit from this parcel.

I believe this resolve is a responsible and practical solution. It honors the intent of Governor Baxter's vision while recognizing the value of local land management and stewardship. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on HP 151 / LD 1724.

Thank you for your time and for your dedication to Maine's public lands.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James O'Malley".

James O'Malley

Licensed Forester 1014

Member, SFMA Advisory Committee since 2010