

Lakes Environmental Association

Protecting Maine's lakes since 1970

May 5, 2025

Re: Support for LD 1882: "Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Conduct Rulemaking Regarding Significant Vernal Pools"

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and the Distinguished Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Colin Holme and I am the Director of the Lakes Environmental Association. Our organization is headquartered in Bridgton, Maine and we directly work in the upper Sebago and Saco River watersheds but we also partner with organizations and agencies like the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to address issues related to lakes and freshwater systems across the State. Our programs include water quality monitoring, aquatic invasives control and prevention, in-school and public education, stream restoration, stormwater control, and technical assistance for landowners, businesses, and municipalities.

In the last decade, I have seen several significant vernal pools impacted by new driveways, roads, buildings, and houses right next to vernal pool depressions. While there are existing laws in place to protect vernal pools, the primary mechanism is a rule that requires maintaining 75% of the upland habitat within 250 feet of the pool in its natural state. This is a good standard but it leaves no protective buffer immediately around the pool and it can be difficult to enforce because it is a percentage and the development does not need to be contiguous.

Vernal pools are the breeding grounds for many of Maine's amphibians and our populations are declining. A development setback of 100 feet for this critical habitat will help protect these species and ensure they are part of Maine's future.

In our area of Western Maine, new building and construction is booming and without adequate protection around significant vernal pools, we will likely see irreparable degradation of these unique ecological systems or disappearance all together.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. **I encourage you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1882.**



Colin Holme
Executive Director
Lakes Environmental Association

