

**Testimony of Eliza Townsend**  
**In support of LD 1992**  
***Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Conduct Rulemaking***  
***Regarding Significant Vernal Pools***  
**May 5, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Committee on Environment & Natural Resources, I am Eliza Townsend. Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club, pleased to speak to you today in support of LD 1882.

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things, the basis of life on our planet. Its loss is one of the most urgent environmental challenges facing Earth today. In just one example, a study released last week found that 75% of bird species in North America are in decline<sup>i</sup>. For our own and our children's future, we must do all that we can to protect biodiversity, including by protecting all types of habitat.

Vernal pools are one such habitat. They serve as essential breeding habitat for amphibians at the base of the food chain and attract larger creatures looking for food.

For two decades, Maine's vernal pools have been considered Significant Wildlife Habitat, a resource of state significance. Yet the Department of Environmental Protection's rules regarding vernal pools have a weak point which allows development too close to such fragile resources.

Maine is experiencing both development pressure and a housing crisis, creating the risk that we will continue to lose fragile and essential vernal pools unless we act.

LD 1882 directs the DEP to update its Chapter 335 rules to better protect vernal pools by strengthening buffers and adjusting the identification criteria as it relates to drying dates.

This rule update can make a meaningful difference in the continued health of a critical but unsung Significant Wildlife Habitat. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adn4381>