

Jill Saxby
Maine Council of Churches
LD 2141

My name is Rev. Jill Saxby. I am a retired minister, and a volunteer member of the Public Policy Committee of the Maine Council of Churches (MCC). The Council is composed of seven mainline Protestant denominations in Maine: Episcopal, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, New England Society of Friends (Quaker), Presbyterian-USA and Evangelical Lutheran.

MCC is a long-time member of the Environmental Priorities Coalition. LD 2141 is one of the EPC's priority bills for the current legislative session.

The Maine Council of Churches speaks out on issues and public policy proposals that are in alignment with our member denominations' common moral values. These include a collective sense of responsibility for the ways in which we use and abuse the natural resources entrusted to us: water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, and animals.

MCC supports the plan envisioned by LD 2141. That plan can help us meet our collective responsibility to protect and preserve Maine's lakes and farmlands. Keeping at least a portion of these unclaimed deposits within our state and dedicating them to this worthy public purpose makes sense. Maine's "bottle bill" was originally intended to address the environmental urgency of reducing litter and pollution. It has been a great success and is woven into the everyday habits of many Maine households. LD 2141 is a fair and sensible way to ensure that some of the deposits that are never claimed are also purposely directed to the urgent needs facing Maine's environment now.

Addressing development pressures that are squeezing traditional farmlands out of agricultural production and putting increasing strain on the health of our lakes will require stable funding in years to come. LD 2141 would provide such a source by keeping some of the unclaimed deposits now going out of state here in Maine, to serve the public good by protecting Maine's lakes and farmlands.

Maintaining the health of our lakes is vital for both environmental and economic reasons. Our lakes provide clean water, beautiful scenery, outdoor recreation, and generations-long gathering places for many Maine families and for out-of-state visitors, as well as economic revenue for municipalities. Keeping farmland in agricultural production supports rural communities and preserves local food sources.

Both our lakes and our farms are deeply woven into Maine's environmental and cultural heritage. We believe they deserve every effort we can make to meet our collective responsibility to protect and sustain them, not only for our own immediate needs, but for future generations.

For these reasons, the Maine Council of Churches, through its Public Policy Committee, urges you to vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 2141.