RE: Testimony for LD 2070 "An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands"

Dear Esteemed Members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Megan Sauberlich and I am a student and President of the Green Team at the University of Maine. I'm reaching out to advocate my support for LD 2070, "An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands."

Along with my studies in Economics these past few years, I have interned with the UMaine Mitchell Center, studying Municipal Food and Solid Waste Management in Maine. During this research process, it became apparent that food waste diversion, and pay-as-you-throw programs are viable options for reducing municipal solid waste. As waste, and the cost/ton of waste management has gone up, reduction and diversion methods have saved municipalities money each year. I write this to point out that even though increasing landfill capacity into natural resources seems like an inevitable sacrifice, I strongly believe it is not, and should not be seen as such.

This policy represents the alternative to accepting 'inevitabilities.' Prohibiting landfill expansion into wetlands sets a precedent that will put long-term objectives into play, right now, environmentally, socially, and economically.

Wetlands serve as a carbon sink. We are at a critical point in lowering emissions, and taking away a natural mechanism for reducing the Greenhouse gas effect goes down a path that could be irreversible. Not to mention, the health effects of landfills are toxic and compoundable. Allowing expansion means paving the way for the future of these effects.

Ecologically, we have biodiversity that is not only valuable to the working ecosystem, but to hunters throughout Maine. Landfills are not contained to their immediate area, and allowing expansion would have an immense impact on a variety of species, and their regular habitats. However, my support for this bill comes from the realization that waste reduction, and diversion is not only beneficial environmentally but socially and economically necessary.

Wetlands are a resource. Socially and economically, they provide renewable extractable resources that provide for the families of the Penobscot Nation, as well as Maine's hunting, tourism and research sector. Poisoning, and threatening the flow of this resource, is not in the best interest of the public. Wetlands have been placed in the trust of the State, and I believe that this bill forces long-term perspective into policy thinking and diverges from a dangerous fate of our natural resources. I once again advocate my support for LD 2070. Thank you for taking the time to read through this testimony. I appreciate the work you do.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Sauberlich