



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 56

*An Act to Provide Free Admission to State Parks and Historic Sites for the Spouses and
Children of Veterans Holding Free Day Use Passes*

January 25, 2023

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Andy Cutko, and I am the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands. I am speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) neither for nor against LD 56, *An Act to Provide Free Admission to State Parks and Historic Sites for the Spouses and Children of Veterans Holding Free Day Use Passes*.

Maine State Parks and Historic Sites currently allow free day-use access to senior citizens, children under five, Maine veterans, gold star families, and military service members on active duty. This bill would extend free access to Maine State Parks and Historic Sites for the spouse and children of a veteran holding a free day-use pass. We currently extend free access to spouses and children of active military members, but we do not extend free access to family members of others with free status.

Because fees from State Parks are directed to the state's General Fund, this bill will have a fiscal impact. To calculate the fiscal impact, we would need to estimate the level of State Park use by veterans' spouses and children, accompanied by a veteran -- but only those spouses under 65 and children over five. Because the Bureau does not collect data on State Park use by veterans, the fiscal impact is difficult to estimate.

Maine veterans have provided an immeasurable service to our state and nation, and their families have made sacrifices that enabled and endured their service. If the Committee finds the fiscal impact acceptable, this bill would recognize those sacrifices by facilitating family gatherings at State Parks and Historic Sites for Maine veterans.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.

HARLOW BUILDING
18 ELKINS LANE
AUGUSTA, MAINE



PHONE: (207) 287-3200
FAX: (207) 287-2400