

May 4, 2023

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***Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government***

***RE: LD 1687 - An Act to Improve Geographic Information System Data Acquisition and Maintenance***

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Kaitlyn Nuzzo and I am the Government Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of LD 1687 - An Act to Improve Geographic Information System Data Acquisition and Maintenance.** I offer these supportive comments on behalf of The Nature Conservancy, Maine Audubon, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. The Nature Conservancy has been leading conservation in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 300,000 acres.

LD 1687 provides important capacity to the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to establish two new staff positions and provide funding for acquiring critical spatial data including high resolution aerial images.

Our organizations strongly support the Maine Library of Geographic Information (GeoLibrary) and its board. The GeoLibrary Board provides guidance for acquisition and hosting of geographic data of critical importance to all state agencies, land managers and users, and communities in the State. Our organizations rely on the up-to-date, accurate geospatial information the state maintains for planning land and water conservation projects, creating decision support tools, and planning for climate change adaptation and mitigation. We know the GeoLibrary and board cannot continue to provide this service without increased support from the State.

Private industry, town governments, state agencies, non-profits, colleges and universities, and private citizens rely on the Maine GeoLibrary and we hope your committee will advance this modest request to keep their programs going.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of LD 1687. I'm happy to answer questions now or at any time.

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The Nature Conservancy

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Maine Audubon

Jeff Romano  
Maine Coast Heritage Trust