



## Department of the Secretary of State

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### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### TESTIMONY OF KATE MCBRIEN, MAINE STATE ARCHIVIST

##### Testifying in Favor

L.D. 1667, “An Act Regarding Recommendations for Changing Place Names in the State”

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government; I am Kate McBrien, Maine’s State Archivist. I am here to share my support for LD 1667 and ask that you vote ought to pass.

The names we give to Maine’s places are powerful statements of both who we were and who we are now. They describe our landscape, our culture, and our history. But names can change, sometimes for the better and sometime for the worse. One of the treasures held in the Maine State Archives is the journal of Maine surveyor Joesph Treat. In 1820, Governor William King ordered Treat to travel up the Penobscot River, to survey the land and assess the natural resources of this new state. Treat did so under the guidance of Penobscot Lieutenant Governor Joseph Neptune. Throughout the trip, Treat recorded the Penobscot names for the various falls, islands, and gathering places on the river. Most of those names have changed since that voyage in 1820.

Naming a place is significant and impactful work. When a name needs to change, the community should have a chance to participate in that process. The process and guidelines for names should be clear and easily accessible. I would be pleased to serve on the Maine Board on Place Names to support this process.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.