



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Stacy Brenner in introducing LD 2253, "*An Act Authorize a Stop-work Order Regarding an Activity That is Creating a Substantial Adverse Impact to a Protected Natural Resource*"

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
March 7, 2024

Representative Gramlich, and Distinguished Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Stacy Brenner. I represent Senate District 30, which includes all of Gorham and most of Scarborough. I am pleased to introduce LD 2253, "*An Act Authorize a Stop-work Order Regarding an Activity That is Creating a Substantial Adverse Impact to a Protected Natural Resource*"

As we stand at the crossroads of environmental stewardship and economic progress, it's imperative that we strike a balance between development, conservation and the proliferation of clean energy. The Maine DEP plays a pivotal role in ensuring that this balance is maintained, but currently lacks the critical tool of immediate but time limited stop work orders to effectively enforce environmental regulations.

Simply put, this bill allows the DEP to issue an immediate, but time limited stop work order for a project that is in violation of a permit. This immediacy allows the violator to remedy the activity. If that doesn't happen, the department has a minute to seek a stop work order from the judicial system without having the damage to the natural resource continue during that time.

Granting the Maine DEP the authority to issue stop work orders is about holding accountable those who endanger our natural resources and public health through irresponsible practices. It empowers the DEP to intervene swiftly and decisively when projects pose imminent threats to our environment, specifically when a permit has been issued with careful regard for the protection of a natural resource area.

Imagine a scenario where a construction project is dangerously close to contaminating a vital water source or encroaching upon protected wetlands. Without the ability to issue stop work orders, the DEP's hands are tied, and irreversible damage could occur before legal action can be taken. Allowing the DEP this authority ensures that swift action can be taken to halt activities that pose immediate risks to our environment.

Moreover, granting the DEP the power to issue stop work orders sends a strong message that Maine takes environmental protection seriously. It demonstrates our commitment to upholding



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

the highest standards of environmental stewardship and ensuring that our natural resources are preserved for future generations.

Some may argue that granting this authority could hinder economic development. However, I would argue that a healthy environment is the foundation of a thriving economy. By protecting our natural resources, we are investing in the long-term sustainability and prosperity of our state. And, we need a DEP that has the ability to enforce the regulations the legislature has set in statute.

In conclusion, granting the Maine DEP the authority to issue time limited stop work orders is not just a matter of environmental protection; it's a matter of safeguarding the health, safety, and prosperity of our communities. It's about ensuring that responsible development goes hand in hand with environmental protection. I'm available to answer any questions. Thank you.