



SAM-ILA

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Testimony In Support

LD 2251, An Act to Amend the Mining Excise Tax Laws

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for
Legislative Action

March 12, 2023

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Taxation,

My name is David Trahan. I am the Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of
Maine - Institute for Legislative Action (SAM-ILA), testifying in support of LD 2251, An Act to
Amend the Mining Excise Tax Laws.

It might be a surprise to some members of this committee to learn that as a former
legislator, I was a vocal critic of the Land for Maine's Future Program. During my 12 years as a
legislator and another 12 years as lobbyist for the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, I have come to
be one of its strongest advocates. The Land for Maine's Future Program and now the new LMF
trust fund guarantees traditional uses like hunting, fishing, and trapping as well as responsible
timber harvesting.

Recently, working with our conservation partners, the Legislature, and the Governor this
program has purchased critical wildlife habitat for deer yards and trout spawning habitats. Deer
wintering areas that also support over 50 other wildlife species have gone from 13 percent of the
landscape to 3 percent in certain parts of the state. We have seen a corresponding loss of
opportunity for guides and those that depend on the economic benefits associated with a healthy
Whitetail Deer population.

One of my greatest criticisms of the Land for Maine's Future program was how it was funded. I did not agree bonding was the best use of taxpayer funds. Bonding for the purposes of purchasing land has stopped. The new LMF Trust Fund is designed to accept funds from almost any source and the interest generated from those funds is used to not only buy the land but maintain it as well.

Working with Senator Timberlake and Breen, the Governor, partners and key members of the Legislature, we secured a \$40 million direct appropriation from the General Fund. Although that was a historic moment, four years passed quickly and next year, the LMF program will commit all its remaining funds. To continue this important work, the LMF Trust Fund needs a stable source of revenue. This legislation could provide a great first step forward in achieving that goal by providing annual revenue from the mining excise tax.

The Land for Maine's Future Program is one of the most popular programs in our state. It protects traditional uses, and it provides recreational opportunities for those that cannot afford to buy land of their own.

In my lifetime Maine has changed dramatically. Most of the wild places have been developed, particularly in southern Maine. Northern, Eastern and Western Maine lands have been heavily logged and experiencing new pressure to develop renewal energy, like wind and solar.

Sadly, in the wake of the Covid Pandemic, individuals from urban areas are buying large chunks of land and putting up gates, shutting off access to wild places generations of Maine families have enjoyed.

The land from Maine's Future Program not only conserves land but also preserves our outdoor culture.

There is an amendment being proposed today to dedicate 50% of the Mining Excise Tax to the LMF Trust Fund. We appreciate the intent of the amendment and thank those that prepared it.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Trahan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Trahan, Executive Director, SAM-ILA