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Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

RE: LD 39 - An Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report Their Participation in a Forest Carbon Project

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Kaitlyn Nuzzo and I am the Government Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to testify neither for nor against LD 39, an Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report Their Participation in a Forest Carbon Project.**

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. Conservation is at our core, and we are proud to be the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing about 300,000 acres. We work with many partners including public agencies, Wabanaki Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.

Maine's forests are essential to our environment, economy, quality of life, wildlife habitat, water quality, and rural communities. They also play a central role in helping Maine meet its climate goals by capturing and storing carbon in the forest and in forest products.

Financial incentives, including the opportunity to participate in forest carbon projects, are important to Maine landowners and are important to meeting Maine's climate goals. On a portion of TNC's St John River Forest, TNC blends forest carbon revenue with income from timber harvest and a maple sugar lease, demonstrating compatibility of these approaches.

Forest carbon projects are already reported and accounted for through several existing public registries, therefore we do not view it as essential that Maine create an additional public registry. Through conversations with the Maine Forest Service, we understand that this bill aims to provide some convenience in monitoring and evaluating the use of forest carbon projects in Maine and that a central registry would benefit their work. If this bill passes and this registry is created, we strongly encourage the required report of forest carbon projects to be as simple, straightforward, and efficient as possible to not create an undue burden on landowners.

We appreciate that LD 39 has been amended to streamline these reporting requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on LD 39. I'm happy to answer questions at any time.