



Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry  
% Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

January 28, 2025

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

Dear Chair Talbot Ross, Chair Pluecker, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Francesca “Ches” Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon’s Director of Advocacy. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine’s wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 39, *An Act to Require Forest Landowners to Report Their Participation in a Forest Carbon Project*.

As the most forested state in the nation, Maine holds an invaluable, treasured resource that provides not just timber and other forest products, but clean air and water, extensive habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, and a myriad of recreational opportunities. Our forests sequester an amount of carbon equal to at least 60 percent of the state’s annual carbon emissions, a figure that rises to 75 percent when durable forest products are included. Forest carbon projects are one of several opportunities with financial incentives for Maine landowners to help advance our collective climate goals.

I am fortunate to be a member of the Maine Climate Council’s Natural and Working Lands Working Group. Collectively, our group delivered our updated recommendations to the Maine Climate Council to evaluate as part of the official 2024 update to our state’s climate action plan. Within our recommendations, a subgroup focused primarily on the goal of increasing forest carbon sequestration and storage in Maine forests. That group shared that forest carbon management, inventorying, and accounting are parts of a highly dynamic field, and new programs and methodologies are constantly emerging. In addition to recommending increases to incentives and the availability of technical assistance, training, and education for forest landowners, foresters, and loggers to implement climate-friendly practices, the subgroup called for improving forest carbon data, monitoring, and verification to support forest policymaking and outreach program development. This bill represents an important step toward achieving that goal.

While forest carbon projects are reported and accounted for in a variety of ways already, we support the Maine Forest Service's (MFS) goal to compile existing and future projects into a central registry. We appreciate MFS's commitment to making the reporting requirements as streamlined as possible for landowners and their openness to incorporating feedback from a variety of stakeholders in these early stages.

We have a responsibility to Maine wildlife, communities, and economies who depend on our forests to think critically about policies that keep our forests healthy, intact, and productive. LD 138<sup>31</sup> advances one of many tools that will help us continue this essential work together. **We encourage the Committee to support this bill.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Francesca "Ches" Gundrum  
Director of Advocacy