



Russell Black
Senator, District 5

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**LD 510, "An Act to Require the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,
Bureau of Parks and Lands to Maintain the Weld to Byron Road in Township 6 North of
Weld"**

Public Hearing: February 27, 2025

Sen. Talbot-Ross, Rep. Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Senator Russell Black; and I am here to introduce LD 510, "An Act to Require the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands to Maintain the Weld to Byron Road in Township 6 North of Weld."

This bill requires the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) to take responsibility for maintaining the Weld to Byron Road in Township 6 North of Weld.

Currently, the State of Maine is the main landowner in the area, except for a small piece of land owned by Bayroot LLC. The Weld to Byron road provides important access to the land BPL manages and the Bureau has already made improvements to parking areas at trailheads to encourage recreational use. However, after flooding in June 2023 washed out parts of the road and made it impassable, the county faced the possibility of discontinuing maintenance since the state owns the land. This led to a lot of pushback from hikers and outdoor users who depend on this road to access the area.

The county invested well over \$20,000 to repair the road; and when they approached BPL to take over the maintenance of the road, the response was a hard no. BPL offered only limited help to grade for \$5,000 a year over several years. Unfortunately, no action was taken in 2024; and the county has continued grading the road on its own.

With the state currently focused on purchasing land and spending little on infrastructure, the town of Weld has been left to maintain its section of the road, while BPL has not fulfilled its responsibility for the road in Township 6. Since BPL has encouraged more traffic and use in the area, it's only fair they take on the responsibility to maintain the road to support the growing number of visitors.

I've seen the increase in traffic firsthand; and it's clear that the Bureau should be stepping up to help maintain the road, especially given that they manage the land in the area. This is an important issue for local communities and outdoor enthusiasts, and I hope you will support this bill to ensure the road remains open and accessible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee
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