

Hello and good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Douder, and members of the Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources. It is my pleasure to be speaking before you today on LD 226 An Act to Protect the Cultural Resources and Historical Heritage of Sears Island in Searsport by Extending Conservation Easement Protections.

Please, support this bill and protect this special place. Let the decision you make on this bill be as long-lasting and impactful as Governor Baxter's decision to gift the State of Maine Baxter State Park in 1931.

Just as the alpine flora is unique at Baxter, so too are the plants and birds and ecosystems of Sears Island. The Wabanaki people knew this and chose this place to fish and hunt.

The Executive Officer claims (ABC Maine, Feb 20, 2024) development of this island will reduce and stabilize the cost of electricity for the people of Maine. That has been the same claim being made about the solar sites plastered around Maine, and yet Versant Energy was granted another 23% increase by the PUC. How is that making energy more affordable for the people of Maine?

Per an agreement with Former Governor Baldacci, Mack Point is always to take precedence over Sears Island for development purposes. We are told that development will cost too much. And yet, in the same news report cited earlier, Governor Mills claims the wind project proposed will bring more than a trillion dollars of outside investments to Maine. Yes, trillion with a T.

Sears Island shouldn't be about commerce, electricity, or jobs. It's about the preservation of a fragile ecosystem. Just like Baxter State Park.

Let's leave future Maine something special – Just like Governor Baxter left us.

Thank you,

Alicia Collins

Resident & Citizen of Sidney