

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and ENR Committee Members, My name is Jesse Watson, I live in Rockland, and I am cofounder of the Maine Ecological Design School. As part of that educational effort I teach people how to live resilient and productive lives in ecological balance with the ecosystems right outside their doors. I am testifying **in support of LD 226** the act to extend conservation easement protections to the majority of Sears Island. This is an idea whose time has finally come. It's time to recognize that the highest value of Sears Island is to conserve this gem of Penobscot bay into perpetuity. Between the carbon sequestration of the forest, the habitat to birds and marine species, and the cultural value to Wabanaki people and other local residents this island is better off undeveloped than paved for any reason. I've been a part of successful grassroots efforts to preserve this island since 2004. My daughter (who can't be here today) is at least the third generation of Mainer in my short memory who has advocated for the preservation and conservation of this island. Let's all just accept that the highest and best use of this island is to conserve it in its natural state and not develop a deep water port for any reason. Not when a perfectly viable deep water port already exists just across the water on Mack Point. It's time to stop wasting tax payer money on ill-advised efforts to develop this island finally put it into permanent conservation status. And whether the managing land trust is Maine Coast Heritage Trust or some other entity is immaterial to me, as long as we make it crystal clear that this island is now permanently preserved in it's natural state. This island is better off as habitat for fish and game species, and we should keep it that way. Thank you and please vote ought to pass on LD 226.

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and ENR Committee Members, My name is Jesse Watson, I live in Rockland, and I am cofounder of the Maine Ecological Design School. As part of that educational effort I teach people how to live resilient and productive lives in ecological balance with the ecosystems right outside their doors. I am testifying today **in support of LD 735** "An act to protect sand dunes on Sears Island..." I was let down by my representatives that voted to repeal sand dune protections on Sears Island as part of this recent deep water port effort. I think they were misled by the governor's efforts, and we can see how this effort has been a train wreck because they can't attract federal funding, can't meet the environmental regulatory hurdles, and rely on technology that is untested. This current effort has wasted nearly \$6 million in taxpayers' hard-earned money and enough is enough. Let's remember that we are not the only species that matters on this green land and it's time we started acting like it. It is imperative that we preserve habitat for plants and animals whether they have gills and fins, feathers, fur or hooves. Let's also recognize that this island has been important to our Wabanaki neighbors for thousands and thousands of years. I think it's a responsible and courteous move that's long overdue to establish an indigenous lands protection committee to make sure that development on the island doesn't desecrate any more sacred land. All land is sacred and this island is especially sacred for a variety of environmental and cultural reasons. Repealing the sand dunes protections was a desecration, and this bill corrects that mistake. Please vote ought to pass on LD 735.