



Environmental Priorities Coalition

Testimony in support of LD593, *An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program*

March 13, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Plueker and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Alliance (MCA), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) in support of LD593, *An Act to Extend Funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program*. Maine's EPC is an inclusive statewide alliance of 39 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities. Replenishing the Land for Maine's Future fund is one of nine EPC priorities for the 132nd Legislature thus far.

The EPC has long championed the conservation and protection of Maine's land, water and air. We have worked with partners for many years in the Land for Maine's Future Coalition, a group of allies who work to protect and maintain funding in Maine's signature conservation program that began in 1987. LD593 is a straightforward bill that simply replenishes the existing Land for Maine's Future fund with \$10 million over the next two fiscal years. As you may recall, the last deposit of \$40 million into LMF came through a budget appropriation (via the Cascade) rather than issuing a general obligation bond, and LD593 is consistent with this approach.

The EPC works to meet the current climate crisis in various ways, including working to meet the state's goal to increase conserved natural and working lands to 30 percent by 2030.¹

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https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/2024-11/MWW_2024_Book_112124.pdf, p. 107

Meeting this goal will help

- Protect land from the effects of climate change and keep ecosystems alive for future generations;
- Support sustainable forestry practices that increase carbon storage and help forests survive climate change;
- Preserve soils for sustainable local agriculture and farming;
- Create economic opportunity through development of Maine's forest products and agriculture;
- Protect working waterfronts that sustain marine industries and fisheries and aquaculture

For these reasons, the EPC urges a vote of Ought to Pass on LD593. Thank you for your consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions.



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Solutions for a
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Friends of Casco Bay
CASCO BAYKEEPER

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Immigrant Welcome Center
GREATER PORTLAND



**MAINE
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