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LD 928 "An Act to Maintain Public Access to Town Ways in Maine"

Good morning Senator Baldacci and Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee.

I am bringing this bill forward because of a recurring problem that we are seeing in Piscataquis County and undoubtedly other areas of our state.

Quite often roads become unmaintained or discontinued most often when this happens the municipality or county retains the right of way which allows public access to these unmaintained roads.

What is happening is one landowner or multiple land owners will gate or in some way block off the right of way, knowing that it is unlawful to do so. It appears the reason this is done is because they know that the municipality, land owners, or citizens wishing to use the right of way will have to take them to court and deal with multiple appeals processes and spend 1000's and 1000's of dollars as well as years to get the gate removed.

District 30 Abbot, Beaver Cove, Bowerbank, Cambridge, Greenville, Greenville Junction, Guilford, Monson, Parkman, Sangerville, Sebec, Shirley, Wellington and Willimantic, Plantations of; Kingsbury Plantation and Brighton Plantation, the unorganized territories of; Barnard Township, Elliottsville Township, Big Moose Township, Bowdoin College Grant East Township, Chesuncook Township, Cove Point Township, Days Academy Grant Township, Frenchtown Township, Harfords Point Township, Kineo Township, Lily Bay Township, Moosehead Junction Township, Northeast Carry Township, Shawtown Township, Sugar Island Township, Williamsburg Township, Blanchard, Northeast Piscataquis and Northwest Piscataquis

I have heard of multiple occasions in which the person putting the gate up has simply refused to remove it and instead went down this appeal process road. Most often the person that put the gate up spends very little time at their property and chooses to block it off while they are not there.

My bill would prevent these gates from going up and give the municipality the clear authority to take down the gate or barrier prior to the drawn out process that currently exists.