



***Testimony in Support
LD 1241, "An Act to Establish the Make Change for Wildlife Program to Support
the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund"***

***Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
April 9, 2025***

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Inland Fishers & Wildlife Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LD 1241, *An Act to Create the "Make Change for Wildlife" Program*. My name is Chace Jackson and I'm a partner at the Resurgam Group. Today I'm glad to be here on behalf of our client, The Nature Conservancy in Maine.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization working to create a world where people and nature thrive. Here in Maine, we work alongside state agencies, local communities, Indigenous Nations, landowners, and other partners to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our work is guided by science, and we are deeply committed to addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Maine's biodiversity is at a critical juncture. Nationally, scientists at NatureServe estimate that nearly one-third of U.S. species are at risk of extinction—and here in Maine, we are not immune. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) continues to identify species in trouble. Just last session, with this committee's support, eight additional species—including birds, a bat, a beetle, and a bee—were added to Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List. Today, that list includes 57 species, and it is likely to grow.

Since 1975, the Maine Endangered Species Act (MESA) has been a critical tool for preventing extinctions and protecting the ecosystems that support our economy, our communities, and our way of life. But identifying at-risk species and taking the steps necessary to recover them takes time, scientific expertise, and sustained funding.

That's where the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund plays such a vital role. Created in 1983, the fund has supported the science and monitoring needed to safeguard Maine's most vulnerable species. Its impact is evident: the Bald Eagle—once on the brink of extinction—are now thriving in our skies, thanks in part to this work.

However, as DIFW has reported, contributions to the fund have steadily declined since the 1990s. Longstanding revenue sources like the "Chickadee Check-off" and "Loon

Plate” have declined and plateaued. To maintain and grow this essential work, we need new, sustainable sources of funding.

LD 1241 proposes a thoughtful and innovative approach. By creating the “Make Change for Wildlife” program, this bill gives businesses the opportunity to engage their customers in conservation through voluntary, point-of-sale donations. With options to “round up” a purchase or make small donations, Mainers can contribute meaningfully to the protection of the wildlife we all cherish. And by allowing a modest corporate tax deduction for participating businesses, the bill recognizes and encourages private-sector leadership in conservation.

Importantly, this program would be supported by outreach and materials provided by DIFW and amplified by organizations like The Nature Conservancy and other conservation partners. Together, we can ensure that this effort is both visible and impactful.

LD 1241 is more than a funding mechanism—it’s an invitation to every Mainer to play a role in protecting the wild places and creatures that make our state so special. It also reflects the kind of collaborative, forward-thinking solutions that we need in the face of a growing biodiversity crisis.

We urge the committee to support this bill and help secure the future of Maine’s most at-risk wildlife. Thank you for your time and consideration.