



Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
c/o Office of Fiscal and Program Review
5 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

April 10, 2025

RE: LD 25, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects*

Dear Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Gattine, and Members of the AFA Committee:

My name is Ania Wright, and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 25, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects*.

Maine Audubon is in support of the proposed bond to improve the disposal of PFAS-laden sludge—a smart, necessary investment that will not only protect public health and communities, but also safeguard Maine's precious wildlife and natural ecosystems.

For many years, treated wastewater sludge was applied to farm fields as fertilizer in Maine—a practice we now know introduced PFAS, or “forever chemicals,” into our environment. Maine acted decisively to ban this practice, recognizing the threat these toxic substances pose not only to human health but to the entire web of life that depends on clean soil, water, and habitat. While the ban was an essential first step, the work is far from over. Without proper management and disposal systems in place, PFAS-laden sludge continues to be a risk—especially for our wildlife and natural resources.

With land application no longer an option, sludge is now going into landfills, which have limited space, and rising sludge disposal costs burden taxpayer-funded treatment plants. Without proper management, PFAS can leach into soils, rivers, streams, and coastal waters—spreading through ecosystems where fish, birds, amphibians, and other wildlife are vulnerable to bioaccumulation. Once these chemicals enter the food chain, they persist, magnify, and harm reproductive and immune systems in species across the board. This bond provides a critical path forward to reduce that threat by



funding the installation of technology—like dryers and digesters—that stabilizes sludge, reduces volume, and limits the potential for environmental contamination.

Wildlife habitats are already under pressure from development, climate change, and pollution. Maine's lakes, wetlands, and waterways are some of our greatest natural treasures—and the homes of countless species, from loons to brook trout to bald eagles. Investing in proper sludge management helps protect these fragile ecosystems from additional PFAS pollution, and ensures we maintain the biodiversity that defines our state's character and supports outdoor recreation and tourism.

This bond is not just about waste infrastructure—it's about ecological responsibility. It represents a science-based, common-sense approach that honors Maine's commitment to environmental leadership. By addressing this challenge head-on, we are ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy healthy forests, thriving waterways, and vibrant wildlife populations.

Please support this bond and the critical protections it provides—not only for public health and agriculture, but for the wildlife that depends on us to be good stewards of their habitats.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate