

April 17, 2025

Greg Ponte
Maine Trout Unlimited Council

Committee of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

LD 1529 - An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide



Senator Ross and Representative Pluecker and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Greg Ponte, and I am representing the Maine Council of Trout Unlimited which is made up of six local chapters and 1600+ members in Maine. The Maine Council of Trout Unlimited is a nonprofit conservation organization. Our mission is *"to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams, so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon."*

We are in favor of this bill.

Maine is a very special place, and it is home to one of the last strongholds of native brook trout and landlocked salmon in the Northeast. These species and the food web that sustains them depend on our stewardship of remote, high value ponds and the forests and old growth forests that surround them, buffering them from sedimentation loading and providing habitat for their survival.

These remote areas also provide recreational opportunities unique and increasingly rare to the North Woods, which support our outdoor sporting heritage. Encroaching development and loss of habitat as shown by the accelerating number of building permits awarded from 2009 through 2024, is a direct threat not only to our precious brook trout and salmon, but also other game and non-game species alike.

By passing this bill, you will be protecting more remote, high value ponds. This will protect a vanishing environmental and recreational treasure and enabling smart stewardship of a shrinking, valuable and unique resource within the State of Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am happy to answer questions that relate to this LD or my testimony in favor of it.

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