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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**LD 1441, "Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Access in
Maine"
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
April 28, 2025**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the committee, I am Senator Russell Black and am here today to present LD 1441, "Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Access in Maine."

As most know, I am a lifelong supporter of private landownership and Maine's unique tradition of public recreational access to private land. This bill was born out of my interest in 1) identifying new incentives for landowners to maintain and allow public access and 2) having a thoughtful discussion about what the future of recreational access in Maine will look like, and how we can best protect and sustain our recreational access privileges and traditions.

As a private landowners myself with miles of snowmobile trails across my own land, it can sometimes be frustrating to see the public abuse the privilege of access. At some points, it has made me wonder why I allow this access at all, as often I do not reap any value or benefit from doing so.

To be clear, when I submitted this language earlier in the winter this concept was not as flushed out as I had hoped, but at a minimum, I believe it is important to keep this topic high on the radar of policymakers as our economy, health, and outdoor enjoyment depend on the goodwill of private landowners.

I'd also like to mention that this bill is in no way intended to criticize landowners- especially those landowners in the unorganized territory. What I envisioned was a thoughtful process whereby a group of key stakeholders could assess current access trends, identify future needs, and recommend strategies that we should consider that could incentivize, compensate, and encourage recreational access long into the future. In other words, my interest is not in requiring landowners to do anything, but instead to have a conversation between they and interested parties about what we can do for them.

The need for this type of discussion, which the State has periodically engaged in, is not just aimed at big landowners or small landowners, or those in the north versus those in the south, but a big picture look at Maine's overall access landscape and what the user community should be thinking about in terms of protecting this tradition.

I understand that the committee is also in possession of another bill proposed by Senator Baldacci that pertains to similar topics, and I understand if you are interested in combining the two vehicles, but I would encourage a thoughtful and deliberative conversation among key stakeholders to address some of the considerations I have brought forward and those of others.

Thank you for your consideration.