



Maine Conservation Voters

Inform. Vote. Protect.

Testimony in support of LD1882, Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Conduct Rulemaking Regarding Significant Vernal Pools

May 5, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I'm speaking in support of **LD1882, Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Conduct Rulemaking Regarding Significant Vernal Pools.**

Vernal pools are the temporary bodies of water that form in the spring as a result of melted snow and spring rains. They typically dry up in the summer, leaving behind a depression rich with leaves, nutrients and other forest debris. They serve as critical habitat for the reproduction and early lives of Maine amphibians such as several species of salamander, wood frogs, fairy shrimp and Eastern spadefoot. Maine has a history of appreciation for the key role these pools play in the forest ecosystem that sustains wildlife in Maine. According to the United States Geological Survey, they are a critical part of nature as both predator and prey. They eat insect pests which is a benefit to agriculture and help control mosquitos which benefits human health. Their moist, permeable skin makes amphibians vulnerable to drought and toxic substances, so they are exceptional indicators of ecosystem health. The health of important ecosystems, including forests and wetlands that provide habitat for amphibians, contributes billions of dollars to the economy by supporting the fishing and timber industries and recreation.¹

As science on vernal pools has evolved and climate change has affected the conditions in and around vernal pools, it's time for us to re-examine our protocols and update them to keep protecting these valuable resources. That's what LD1882 will do, with a focus on "significant" vernal pools. Maine statute defines this as a pool that has documented use in any given year by state-listed rare, endangered or threatened species that commonly require a vernal pool to complete a critical portion of their life-history is a significant vernal pool. Examples of vernal pool

¹ <https://armi.usgs.gov/importance-of-amphibians.php>

dependent state-listed endangered or threatened species include, but are not limited to, Blanding's turtles, Spotted turtles, and Bog haunter dragonflies.²

I hope you will support this bill and direct the DEP to update Rulemaking for this critical natural resource. Thank you for your consideration.

²<https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/nrpa/vernalpools/index.html#:~:text=A%20pool%20that%20has%20documented,is%20a%20significant%20vernal%20pool>.