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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM
COMMISSIONER

**TESTIMONY OF
ROB WOOD, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF LAND RESOURCES
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**SPEAKING NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 1904
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MUNICIPAL SHORELINE PROTECTION LEGAL
FUND**

PRESENTED BY SEN. NANGLE

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

DATE OF HEARING:

MAY 12, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee, my name is Rob Wood and I am the Director of the Bureau of Land Resources at the Department of Environmental Protection. I am speaking neither for nor against L.D. 1904.

L.D. 1904 would establish a fund at the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), the purpose of which is to assist municipalities in paying legal costs incurred in pursuing egregious shoreland zoning violations. The Department oversees the implementation of the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act and supports municipalities in administering and enforcing their shoreland zoning ordinances. Municipalities are required to adopt ordinances that are no less stringent than the Department's minimum guidelines and are responsible for enforcing against violations of their ordinances, which

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in some cases may necessitate legal action. The knowledge that funding is available to support such legal actions may lead some municipalities, especially smaller municipalities with fewer resources, to more readily proceed with shoreland zoning enforcement cases.

However, the administration of the proposed fund would require staff resources, whether it is housed at GOPIF, at the Department, or in another agency. If the bill moves forward, GOPIF or the Department will recommend one additional staff position to administer the fund.

The Department also notes that the Committee should consider clarifying the term “egregious” or removing this term from the bill. Whether a shoreland zoning violation is considered egregious is subjective and may vary from municipality to municipality, which could cause administrative challenges for the agency administering the fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee, both now and at the work session.