



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Legislative Director, Maine Conservation Voters
In Support of LD 1312

"An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue for School Construction and for the Land for Maine's
Future Trust Fund"

Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

November 14, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury and I'm the new Legislative Director at Maine Conservation Voters. MCV is a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here to testify in support of LD 1312, "An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue for School Construction and for the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund"

The Land for Maine's Future (LMF) is the primary way that we fund conserving Maine's land for natural and recreational purposes. LMF is Maine's most celebrated land conservation program. Since 1987, LMF has been a highly successful and popular program and every dollar of LMF funding is matched by other funds, at the local and/or federal level. It keeps working forests and farmland open, secures waterfront access for seafood harvesters, and ensures public access for outdoor recreation. For nearly four decades, LMF has helped conserve more than 650,000 acres, including: 330,000 acres of working forests; 9,819 acres of farmland; 1,272 miles of shoreland; 158 miles of recreational trails; 73 recreational water access sites; and 30 commercial working waterfront properties. All 16 counties have benefited. In addition to providing public access, LMF supports Maine's traditional industries—fishing, farming, forestry, and tourism—that depend upon Maine's extraordinary environment. The program is critical to protecting Maine's character and traditions.

Funding LMF will help ensure that all Mainers have access to outdoor spaces. Having the ability to get outside and enjoy the natural environment has benefits to both our mental and physical health. However, there are tremendous disparities when it comes to accessing outdoor spaces where one can reap the benefits of being in nature. Research has shown that there is a "nature gap" and that black and brown people are three times more likely to live in a nature deprived

area than white people¹. Funding LMF can help ensure that all Mainers have a place for recreation and respite which will help to address those disparities and improve health outcomes. It will also help invest in local economies, particularly rural communities. Additionally, climate change disproportionately affects the most vulnerable. Supporting resilient ecosystems and carbon storage and sequestration that land conservation provides can help mitigate those impacts.

Additionally, LMF has also long been a priority for the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC). The EPC is the largest environmental coalition in the state and is comprised of forty-one conservation, climate action, veteran, and public health organizations that represent over 100,000 members across the state. Since the creation of the EPC in 2004, the coalition has recognized the importance of LMF and has consistently made it a priority for the coalition.

Land conservation is the most basic step we can take to fight climate change and biodiversity loss, and bridge the nature gap. LD 1312 can help provide much-needed funding for this important program. We urge you to support LD 1312.

Thank you.

¹ Shea, J. R., Doshi, S., & Edberg, S. (2020, July 21). *The Nature Gap*. Center for American Progress.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-nature-gap/>