



Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

January 21, 2026

RE: LD 2063, An Act to Clarify Activities Allowed Under the Natural Resources Protection Act

Dear Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Francesca “Ches” Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon’s Director of Advocacy. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation nonprofit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 2063, *An Act to Clarify Activities Allowed Under the Natural Resources Protection Act*.

The Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) is one of Maine’s most important environmental protection laws and any changes to this statute – *big or small* – should be reviewed with great attention and care. From education to conservation, Maine Audubon works to conserve the diverse natural resources of state significance that NRPA was created to help protect.

LD 2063 offers several changes to NRPA, including: 1) allowing DEP to adopt rules to clarify provisions regarding the circumstances under which a permit is not required when an emergency activity is conducted to alleviate a threat caused by a flood event; 2) adding hand planting of native vegetation adjacent to coastal and freshwater wetlands, great ponds, rivers, streams, and/or brooks to the list of activities that do not require a permit; 3) adding hand planting of vegetation in coastal sand dune systems to the list of activities that do not require a permit; 4) with written approval from DEP, adding corrective actions to resolve violations to the list of activities that do not require a permit; 5) adding great ponds and habitat for state endangered and state threatened species that are significant wildlife habitat to the list of areas under the agency’s compensation program; and 5) providing DEP with 3rd-party enforcement rights to enforce deed restrictions or conservation easements executed to meet a requirement under its compensation program.

The series of changes before you represent several thoughtful, much-needed, and science-based adjustments to this law that will better support DEP in administering NRPA, while simultaneously reducing regulatory burden on activities that support the health and future of our state’s protected natural resources. **We respectfully encourage the Committee to support the Department of Environmental Protection’s recommendations.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francesca 'Ches' Gundrum".

Francesca “Ches” Gundrum
Director of Advocacy