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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: I am Representative Jim Dill, House District 26, representing Old Town, Bradley, and the Penobscot Nation Voting District. I am here today to present LD 2070, "An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands."

I strongly believe, both personally and scientifically, that wetlands and vernal pools must be protected. These areas are ecologically unique and provide critical breeding and habitat for rare, threatened, and sometimes endangered plant and animal species. Many amphibians, such as blue-spotted and yellow-spotted salamanders, wood frogs, tree frogs, and a variety of reptile species, depend on these habitats.

If I personally wanted to fill in a wetland in Maine to build something (maybe to expand a home or add a garage) I would face strict environmental review, a complicated permitting process through the Maine DEP and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and likely significant costs. I might have to pay mitigation fees or even create replacement wetland habitat to offset the impact. Those safeguards exist for relatively small projects. Expanding a landfill into acres of wetlands and vernal pools is an entirely different scale of impact; one that no amount of mitigation can truly replace. Many of these wetlands connect directly to nearby streams and rivers, meaning any future leakage could move beyond the landfill footprint and into broader water systems. That's a long-term environmental risk we simply shouldn't be building into the landscape.

I urge the committee to carefully consider the long-term implications. Once contamination occurs, no compensation fee can fully repair the environmental damage or restore public confidence in those natural resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions, and I know others following me can provide additional expertise on this issue.

Representative Jim Dill
House District 26