

4 March 2021

To: Agriculture and Forestry Committee

From: Addison Gruber

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 324, An Act to Limit Public Land Ownership in Maine

I am writing as someone who lives in Bar Harbor and as a student at College of the Atlantic urging you to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 324.

Public lands allow for important access and use of Maine’s natural resources. Our public lands are a part of our heritage and are culturally and economically important.

I live in Bar Harbor and am lucky to have Acadia National Park (nearly) in my back yard. I have the opportunity to walk, bike, and enjoy the natural beauty of the park to recreate and see loved ones, especially during the pandemic. Being able to have a place to be outdoors during Covid-19 lockdowns has been important in my wellbeing and health. The park is also vital to the economy of the area providing jobs in the community and bringing in tourism. Acadia has served as my classroom and training ground, giving me the opportunity to learn research and resource management in an applied context. Everyone should be able to have these experiences, and public lands help to make that possible.

We should all have access to public lands. Limiting public lands in Maine would prevent opportunities for learning, recreation, hunting, fishing, tourism, and more. It would hurt communities across the state.

This bill would limit valuable public lands. The process of designating state or federally owned land is already transparent and uses community input. This bill does not address what Maine needs and would put Maine politically opposite to the valuable asset of public lands.

Recognizing the importance of public lands in Maine I hope you will oppose LD 324.

Respectfully,
Addison Gruber