

TESTIMONY OF
Representative Kathy Javner, District 141
Introduction of LD 324 An Act To Limit Public Land Ownership in Maine
SPONSORED BY Representative Kathy Javner
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY
DATE OF HEARING: March 4, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil and esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee; I am Representative Kathy Javner of District 141, introducing LD 324 An Act To Limit Public Land Ownership in Maine.

This bill seeks to strike a balance of land ownership in Maine. Land is our greatest natural resource and our greatest commodity. This bill seeks to limit publicly owned land in the State to no more than 33% of the total land area and 50% of the land area in any county. The bill also allows the State or a municipality to exceed the limits with the approval of 2/3 of the State Legislature.

Yes, I have had conversations with those who are not so favorable to this bill. They were great conversations. That is one of my absolute favorite aspects of being an elected official, listening . The theme of these conversations, whether for or against the bill, was the love of the land. As we all know, land can be very unifying or very divisive; and when it comes to land use, well, we all have had those conversations.

Again, I want to stress that this bill seeks, on every level, to strike a balance and allows us all to begin to formulate a compromise. One that no, not everyone will be satisfied with, but one that will perhaps continue the conversation of compromise as we all seek to be the best caretakers of our land as possible.

The second piece of this bill asks for a biannual report from the Department concerning the percentage of federal and state property ownership statewide and by county. I searched for such a report and was not able to discover one; although, I have heard that one does exist. If one does exist, we would love for it to be made easily available for research; and if one doesn't exist, we would ask that the Department be directed to compile the data in a report to the committee on a biannual basis.

Thank you very much for your time and commitment to the future of our state.