

Audrey Hufnagel
Damariscotta

March 17, 2021

To: Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

From: Audrey Hufnagel

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 471 - An Act To Require Legislative Approval for Certain Leases of Public Lands

My name is Audrey Hufnagel. I am a high school student from Damariscotta Maine and a climate justice advocate. From a young age, I have spent a lot of time in nature, and consequently, I have developed a great love for the natural. I especially love to go hiking and cross country skiing in Maine's forests. The same forests that the CMP corridor would cut through. The loss of this pristine land would be devastating for me and many other Mainers.

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands issued a lease that allowed the CMP corridor to pass through two sections of public land, Johnson Mountain and West Forks Plantation. This was done out of the public eye, with no public say in the matter.

The constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23 explicitly states that certain public land held by the state can only be altered if two thirds majority in the Maine legislature votes in favor of it. The CMP corridor would "substantially alter" these pieces of land, yet the Bureau of Parks and Lands went ahead with the lease without a two thirds vote of the legislature.

The legislature should hold the Bureau of Parks and Lands accountable for failing to secure a two thirds vote from the legislature before issuing these leases to CMP. The BPL should not be allowed to let companies like CMP use public land without public approval. The public should be able to have a say in how this land is used. This act would help make this happen. I therefore urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 471.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Hufnagel