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Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

March 25, 2021

Re: LD 700, An Act To Promote Economic Development and Outdoor Recreation through Investment in State Parks

Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support of LD 700, An Act To Promote Economic Development and Outdoor Recreation through Investment in State Parks, on behalf of Maine Outdoor Brands and our 125 member brands.

Founded in 2017, Maine Outdoor Brands is an alliance of outdoor product and service companies united in their desire to strengthen Maine's \$3 billion outdoor recreation economy. Outdoor recreation not only supports a robust and thriving outdoor industry in Maine, but it also helps attract and retain the talent we desperately need, inspires entrepreneurs, and offers a quality of life that keeps our communities and people healthy.

We relied on our outdoor areas more than ever during the pandemic to stay active and spend time safely with family and friends. As our state parks were shattering attendance records, eclipsing the 3 million mark for the first time despite public health closures and capacity limits, more people were also buying outdoor gear and equipment from Maine's outdoor product manufacturers and retailers. For example,

- L.L.Bean reported a 5% revenue increase over 2019, its largest annual increase in the last decade<sup>1</sup>
- Freedom Boat Club of Maine reported a 40% increase in sales of new boats in 2020<sup>2</sup>
- Hyperlite Mountain Gear recently added a new investor, who cited growth trends for outdoor and wellness products as their rationale for investing<sup>3</sup>

While this increase in consumer spending and participation is overall a promising sign for Maine's outdoor economy, it has exposed weaknesses in Maine's current outdoor infrastructure. State officials and outdoor patrons alike have reported overuse from packed trailheads to trail damage and littering at parks and preserves.

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<sup>1</sup> See *LLBean reports 2020 revenue boom, issues double-digit employee bonus*, Mainebiz, March 22, 2021 ([link](#))

<sup>2</sup> See *Boat sales took off during the pandemic and now dealers can't keep up with demand*, CNBC, March 19, 2021 ([link](#)).

<sup>3</sup> See *Biddeford-based Hyperlite Mountain Gear adds NY investor*, Mainebiz, March 8, 2021 ([link](#)).



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Because of this, it is crucial that Maine prioritize outdoor recreation investments as we look to recover and rebound from the pandemic. Investments in our outdoor economy, including LD 700, should be thought of as key pieces of our pandemic response.

Maine's outdoor economy and success as an attractive place to live, work and visit depends on having robust outdoor recreation infrastructure including local parks and recreation areas, larger-scale conservation projects to draw visitors to rural Maine, trail networks, and accessible information about all of it.

Our outdoor lifestyle is critical for growing and sustaining Maine's outdoor economy, which at 4.2% of Maine's economy, is double the national average.<sup>4</sup> More than 40,000 people work in the outdoor recreation industry in Maine, and this job growth can continue if we prioritize investments in our industry and natural resources. For these reasons, we urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if there is additional information we can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Kordick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jenny Kordick  
Executive Director, Maine Outdoor Brands

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<sup>4</sup> See *New Report Details Outdoor Recreation's Economic Impact In Maine And Nationally*, Maine Outdoor Brands, November 10, 2020 ([link](#)).

# MAINE'S OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY

Maine's outdoor recreation economy is large, growing faster than the overall economy, and providing jobs for tens of thousands of Maine workers.



Maine ranks

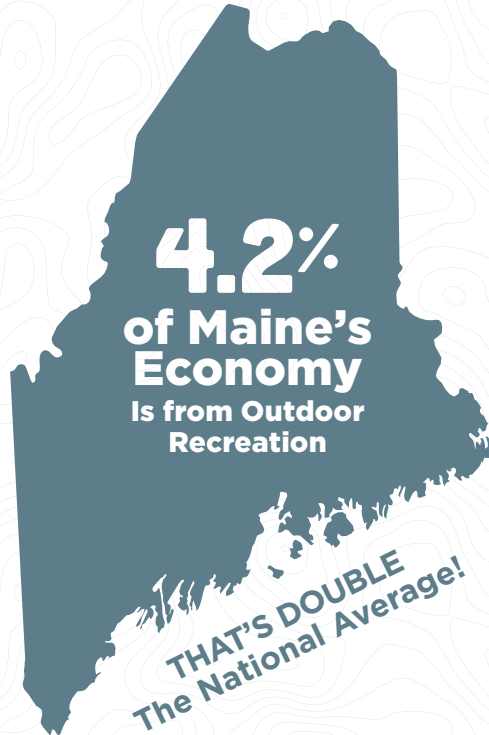
# 5TH

In The Nation

for the Value Outdoor Recreation Provides to the State's Economy

# MAINE

OUTDOOR BRANDS



Outdoor Recreation  
Contributes Nearly

# \$3 BILLION

to Maine's Economy

That is

# 32%

Greater Than the  
Construction Industry

Maine's  
**OUTDOOR  
RECREATION  
Economy**

**IS GROWING FASTER  
THAN THE  
STATE'S ECONOMY!**

In Maine  
**OUTDOOR RECREATION:**

Accounts for

# 4.7%

of All Jobs in the State—  
Supporting More Than  
40,000 Total

Outdoor Experience  
Providers Contributed

# \$1.1 BILLION

to The State's Economy  
in 2019\*

Manufacturing  
Contributed

# \$240M

to The State's Economy  
in 2019

## NATURE-BASED ACTIVITIES THAT ADD THE MOST VALUE TO MAINE'S OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY:

Boating & Fishing

# \$284M



Hunting/Shooting/  
Trapping  
**\$53M**



RVing  
**\$152M**



Snow Activities  
**\$64M**



Climbing/Hiking/  
Tent Camping

# \$30M

