

Date: February, 19th, 2021

To: Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee

From: Cole Cochrane, Maine Youth Action

Re: Supporting LD 1075, An Act to Protect Public Lands



Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and the esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee. My name is Cole Cochrane, I am the legislative coordinator for Maine Youth Action, and I am speaking in support of LD 1075, An Act to Protect Public Lands.

Maine Youth Action is representing all of Maine’s youth stakeholders in our legislative processes, allowing them to have a larger voice in our politics. One of the critical issues the youth are facing is climate change. At Maine Youth Action, we have advocated for numerous policies conserving our environment, transition to a clean energy economy, reducing waste, among other solutions to solving our environmental issues across the state. One of the issues we consider to be highly relevant in our discussions about climate action is the use of our public lands.

As many are aware of, we have witnessed over the past few years Central Maine Power create a corridor by acquiring lands from the BPL that were illegally leased. As one can see, our public lands may be used for purposes that are both environmentally dangerous and highly unpopular to the public. Therefore, it is the state’s role in providing transparency and objectivity to the evaluation process in the use of our public lands in order to prevent such occurrences. LD 1075 does just that. It establishes a process in which lands must now be objectively evaluated in order to provide an accurate conclusion on whether or not the land would be substantially altered. Maine Youth Action supports this bill because environmental degradation of public lands ought not be condoned, and with this process established, it provides an accountability measure that public lands being leased would face minimal environmental harm. Therefore, I encourage the committee to vote “ought to pass.”

