

Senator James Dill
Representative Margaret O'Neil
Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
100 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333

April 29, 2021

Dear Senator Dill and Representative O'Neil,

As organizations concerned with Maine's environment, and especially concerned with the effects of climate change, we wish to offer our support for LD 1549, An Act to Establish a Maine Forest Advisory Board.

Maine's 17.5 million acres of forests play a major role in combatting climate change, absorbing 60% of our carbon pollution annually. They can be a tool in helping us meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.

Further, Maine's forests are of global importance in protecting biodiversity, the basis of all life. Sitting within the Adirondack-Appalachian Forest, they offer the habitat connectivity and varied topography that allow species to move and adapt to rising temperatures. Large, minimally fragmented, and with relatively minor human footprint, they host a rich diversity of ecosystems ranging from alpine tundra and boreal forests to ribbed fens and floodplain hardwood forests. In turn, these ecosystems house a rich array of fish, birds, and mammals.

However, the forest can only provide this remarkable shelter, connectivity, and carbon sequestration if it thrives. We lose an estimated 10,000 acres per year. Forest conversion and insects and disease are just a few of the threats to their continued ability to sequester carbon. If we want to benefit from the remarkable resilience and carbon absorption of the forest, we must ensure its long-term health.

There are many agencies, organizations, and individuals who can contribute their expertise and valuable perspectives to that goal. Convening them in an Advisory Board is a time-honored strategy, one that has worked for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Marine Resources, as well as for 15 other states.

We strongly support the establishment of a Maine Forest Advisory Board and urge you to vote LD 1549 Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,

Jeff Marks
Maine Director & Senior Policy Advocate
Acadia Center



Heather Spaulding
Deputy Director
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners



John R.J. Burrows
Executive Director of U.S. Operations
Atlantic Salmon Federation



Sean Mahoney
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