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LD 736

LD 736 would enhance Maine's ecological reserve system by removing arbitrary caps on the size of the system and making other improvements to the law.

Ecological reserves have exceptional ecological values and immense public benefits. One-third of plants, animals, and habitats in Maine are threatened by climate change. Ecological reserves provide habitat for these species – both at-risk species and common species – that will have an increasingly challenging time navigating land-use changes, fragmentation, and disturbance as well as invasive species, pests and disease, and changing weather patterns.

Ecological reserves are also large carbon sinks, and creating new reserves is a critical step in meeting Maine's climate goals. Maine can't afford to lose one of the state's most valuable assets in the fight against climate change: forests. Ecological reserves store an impressive 30% more aboveground carbon than other lands in Maine, on a per acre basis. It is, therefore, no surprise that some of the oldest trees in Maine are found on ecological reserves, which in addition to being large carbon sinks, create complex, mature, resilient habitat for wildlife.

Passing LD 736 is one step we can take toward a better future for the people of Maine by trapping and storing carbon pollution and conserving our valued natural resources.