



# MAINE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

#### LD 440, "An Act To Conserve the Frances Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark"

*Representative Lynn H. Copeland, HD 14, Testimony in Support* March 3, 2021

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Lynn Copeland and I represent Maine House District 14 which includes downtown and coastal Saco. I testify in support of LD 440, An Act To Conserve the Frances Perkins Homestead National Historic Landmark, sponsored by Senator Maxmin.

Frances Perkins was the first woman to ever be a U.S. Presidential cabinet member. From 1932 until 1945 she served as the U.S. Secretary of Labor in Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Among other significant accomplishments, she created and/or influenced New Deal policy and programs such as Social Security, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and minimum wage. It is appropriate that we honor and preserve her legacy as the woman behind the New Deal whose work lives on and continues to improve the lives of many Americans.

The Francis Perkins Homestead is the Perkins's ancestral farm built in 1837, known as the Brick House, located in the tidal area of the Damariscotta River on 57 acres of fields, forest and stone walls. It is a National Historic Landmark which was purchased by the Frances Perkins Center in January of 2020.

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, has stated, "Occupied for over 260 years by members of the Perkins family, this salt-water farm is significant for its architecture, its archaeological sites, and its agricultural landscape. But more importantly, it was the property that Frances Perkins, first female member of a President's cabinet, considered her life-long home."

Perkins biographer Kirstin Downey observed, "The Brick House was not just a refuge. It played a key role in shaping Frances Perkins's substantive policies. Her undying belief in America's greatness and goodness were rooted in her concept of what makes America unique—and these views were formed at and by that home in Maine."

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Rep. Copeland Testimony In Favor

LD 440 seeks a one-time modest infusion of \$100,000 to ensure safe and accessible access to this public treasure, to make sure it safe for school field trips, educational forums, residential opportunities for scholars, meetings of labor policy makers and others addressing current day economic and social issues.

For all of these reasons – social, historic preservation, educational, architectural, agricultural and coastal access -- I hope you will join me in support of LD 440. Thank you.