



Maine Coast Heritage Trust

A Statewide Land Conservation Organization

Testimony in Support of:

LD 1429: An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of the Maine Climate Council

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Jeff Romano. I am providing testimony on behalf of Maine Coast Heritage Trust in support of LD 1429.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust conserves and stewards Maine's coastal lands and islands for their renowned scenic beauty, ecological value, outdoor recreational opportunities, and contribution to community well-being. We provide statewide conservation leadership through our work with land trusts, coastal communities and other partners. Over the past four decades, we have conserved more than 142,000 acres in Maine.

Our testimony on LD 1429 is focused on those sections of the bill that are most closely aligned with our land conservation work in Maine.

Statewide Inventory of Carbon Stocks: this provision under Section 4 of the bill will not only provide a necessary accounting of the state's carbon stocks, but could also strengthen two laws that already have a good track record supporting land conservation and carbon sequestration: Maine's Farmland and Open Space Law and Tree Growth Tax Law. However, the state should be cautious about making changes to either law to be sure both landowners and municipalities are supportive of any statutory amendments.

Forest Carbon Program: this recommendation under Section 12 of the bill would be a good step toward the development of a new, voluntary, incentive-based forest carbon program for small forest landowners. Such a program would provide a great compliment to Maine's current use tax programs and land conservation efforts, creating an additional incentive for landowners to keep existing forestlands undeveloped.

Land for Maine's Future Funding: section 15 of the bill calls for new funding in support of the Land for Maine's Future program. It has been nearly a decade since the state last invested money in LMF. This very popular program has conserved more than 600,000 acres to date. Designed primarily to ensure traditional public access to the outdoors and to support the state's natural resource-based sectors, LMF conservation also plays an effective role in ensuring Maine's undeveloped lands are sequestering carbon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 1429. We look forward to working with the committee and the bill's sponsor to enact this important legislation.