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***Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources***

***RE: LD 2034 - An Act to Address Identified Gaps in the Laws Governing Erosion Control and the Natural Resources Protection Act***

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Kaitlyn Nuzzo and I am the Government Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to submit comments in support of LD 2034, An Act to Address Identified Caps in the Laws Governing Erosion Control and the Natural Resources Protection Act.** We appreciate the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's efforts to bring this issue forward.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. TNC has been leading conservation in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 300,000 acres.

A major focus of our conservation work in Maine is restoring river and stream health and connectivity. Our state is home to some of the healthiest and most resilient watersheds in the eastern United States, with a 75,000-mile network of river and streams. We support LD 2034 because we believe erosion control is critical to protecting water quality and it should be required statewide. The existing Erosion Control Law hasn't been updated in nearly 30 years and it is time to apply the same protections that have been required in organized towns to the Unorganized Territory (UT).

Additionally, LD 2034 closes gaps in enforcement authority under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). It would clarify that the Maine Land Use Planning Commission and the Maine Forest Service have enforcement authority pursuant to their existing delegated authority under NRPA. Allowing our state agencies and bureaus to work better together will help ensure our critical natural resources are adequately and efficiently protected.

We urge this committee to support LD 2034. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.