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Kaitlyn Nuzzo, Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Maine
kaitlyn.nuzzo@tnc.org



Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

RE: LD 57 - An Act to Amend Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Kaitlyn Nuzzo and I am the Government Relations Director for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of LD 57, An Act to Amend Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List.**

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. The Nature Conservancy 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. We also work across Maine to restore rivers and streams, partner with fishermen in the Gulf of Maine to rebuild groundfish populations, and develop innovative solutions to address our changing climate.

LD 57 includes the recommendations from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) to add to and modify the Maine Endangered Species List. Specifically, the Department recommends:

- Box Turtle and Rapids Clubtail come off the endangered list.
- Adding to endangered (3 species) — Ashton's Cuckoo Bumble Bee, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Tricolored Bat.
- Adding to threatened (5 species) — Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Bicknell's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, and Marginated Tiger Beetle.

The Nature Conservancy supports these recommendations. All eight of these species are vulnerable to climate change, habitat loss or fragmentation, and other population-wide threats. In particular, Bicknell's Thrush and Blackpoll Warbler are bird species that are high elevation breeders in the stunted spruce "krummholz" zone in the mountains and Saltmarsh Sparrows breed in salt marshes. Both the "krummholz" zone and salt marshes are habitats that are highly sensitive to climate change impacts.

By adding species to the Maine Endangered Species List, Department staff can develop management and recovery plans, review proposed projects that might

affect these species, and assure that negative impacts to these species are avoided or minimized whenever possible. As a public document, this list helps businesses, landowners, government agencies and others know which wildlife species are rare and vulnerable in our state. In addition, an accurate and up to date list can help communities, conservation organizations and wildlife advocates focus protection dollars on habitat projects that benefit these vulnerable species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 57. I'm happy to answer questions at any time regarding this bill.