

Written Testimony Opposed to (LD 1441)

From: Matt Stedman

Ashland Maine resident

To: Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Committee

Dear Members,

I'm testifying today in opposition to LD 1441. This bill focuses too much on the unorganized territories. It has a lofty goal and very short time frame (Dec 2025) to provide feedback. I am not opposed to the overall goal, retaining public access to private property but the wording in this bill is not the way to do it.

I am an avid snowmobiler, a very active volunteer in my local club. I understand the loss of access for recreational purposes very well as our local club deals with it almost annually. I am also a licensed forester and have been employed in that field for the last 25 years.

These are difficult discussions and can impact the private property rights of people who buy land in Maine. Everyone who owns property retains or buys it for a reason, and we should not restrict their rights if they see fit to restrict use of the property they own & pay taxes on.

Throughout our beautiful state there are sections of forest land, farmland, open space, housing developments, rural and urban areas. This patchwork is what makes Maine unique. This patchwork is because every landowner has different goals & objectives. Not each acre can provide every value, nor should each landowner be held to the same standard.

Private landowners in Maine have a rich tradition allowing public access to their property, when will the public stop asking more of landowners OR when will landowners stop allowing the public on their land because they ask too much? This should be a question that is answered.

There are multiple affiliations across the State which gather landowners and land users to listen to each other and work through problems. Groups such as the SFLA (Sportsman, Forest, Landowner Alliance) & LRSAB (Landowner Relations, Sportsman Advisory Board). There are also other bills in this session (LD1308) that seek a similar goal, but not so focused on large &/or unorganized territories.

Please consider combining the overarching goals of LD1308 & LD1441 but not in such a short time frame and not focused in the UT. This is a complex issue which needs time to study.

I ask that you take this into consideration and oppose LD1441 in its current form.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matt Stedman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Matthew Stedman (LF3297)