



Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
% Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

April 20, 2023

**RE: LD 1591, An Act to Promote Economic Reuse of Contaminated Land Through Clean Energy Development**

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1591, An Act to Promote Economic Reuse of Contaminated Land Through Clean Energy Development, on behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers. Maine Audubon supports this legislation because it will (1) help Maine reach its renewable energy goals; (2) support farmers whose lands are contaminated by PFAS and are no longer suitable for agricultural purposes; and (3) support “thoughtfully sited” renewable energy development, among other reasons.

LD 1591 would establish a competitive procurement for 5% of Maine’s 2021 retail electricity sales – roughly 400 MW. The procurement would be open to Class 1A resources – which include solar and terrestrial wind energy generation facilities – located on previously developed or impacted land, including brownfield sites, as well as agricultural land where the discovery of PFAS contamination has prevented agricultural activity. The bill would also allow for bids with colocated energy storage systems and would benefit ratepayers by favoring competitively priced projects.

Maine Audubon’s interest in this legislation is multifaceted. As mentioned previously, we support the bill because it would create an economic opportunity for farmers whose lands have been devastated by PFAS contamination. Currently, there is no way to remediate PFAS contamination in soils. Farms across Maine are facing the fact that their land is no longer usable for agricultural purposes. This has enormous implications for the financial stability of farmers and their families. Locating renewable energy projects on these lands would provide a revenue stream on otherwise unusable land.

Locating renewable energy infrastructure on PFAS-contaminated lands, as well as previously developed or otherwise impacted lands (including brownfield sites), is also a leading example of thoughtful renewable energy siting that balances clean energy and natural resource conservation goals. New renewable energy development – likely any new development – if not

not thoughtfully sited, can displace wildlife habitat and otherwise negatively impact Maine's natural resources, including agricultural resources. The natural resource values (i.e., habitat for vulnerable plant and animal species, large forest blocks, prime agricultural soils, etc.) of PFAS-contaminated lands, brownfield sites, or previously-developed lands are minimal. By incentivizing development on those lands, LD 1591 would serve to help Maine to achieve its clean energy goals, as well as its natural resource conservation goals.

For these reasons and more, we strongly encourage the Committee to support LD 1591.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eliza Donoghue".

Eliza Donoghue, Esq.  
Director of Advocacy