



Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

January 10, 2023

RE: LD 2059, An Act Regarding Processing of Applications Under the Natural Resources Protection Act to Ensure Consistency with Shoreland Zoning Laws

Dear Sen. Brenner, Rep. Gramlich, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Francesca “Ches” Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon’s Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine’s wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 2059, *An Act Regarding Processing of Applications Under the Natural Resources Protection Act to Ensure Consistency with Shoreland Zoning Laws*.

The Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) is one of Maine’s most important environmental protection laws. From education to conservation, Maine Audubon works to conserve the diverse natural resources of state significance that NRPA was created to help protect. Maine’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for protecting and restoring Maine’s natural resources and enforcing the state’s environmental laws – including NRPA. LD 2059 would allow DEP to return a NRPA application as incomplete for processing if there is a reasonable likelihood that it would not meet minimum guidelines for municipal zoning and land use controls adopted by the Board of Environmental Protection under the laws governing shoreland zoning. This bill will help save staff time and thus financial resources on the part of the state which, in turn, will help the DEP do their best work to help protect our natural resources. Additionally, we recommend that DEP maintain a list of municipalities with shoreland zoning ordinances that *surpass* state minimums. This will help safeguard local initiatives to uphold robust shoreland protections without impediment.

We thank DEP leadership and staff for their commitment to the protection and enhancement of our environment. We hope you join us in supporting LD 2059. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francesca Gundrum".

Francesca “Ches” Gundrum | Policy Advocate