



MUUSAN

**Maine Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network**

Testimony of Jill Linzee,

**Co-Chair Climate Change Issue Group of Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network
In support of LD 983**

**An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Promote Land Conservation, Working
Waterfronts, Water Access and Outdoor Recreation
April 26, 2021**

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Jill Linzee, Co-Chair of the Climate Change Issue Group for the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network. I write to you to express strong support from MUUSAN for LD 983 and the Land for Maine's Future Program.

One of the key principles of our faith is "respect for the interdependent web of all existence", and that belief compels us to be responsible stewards of the life-sustaining planet that we all inhabit. Passing this legislation is a critical next step toward addressing the greatest threat to life on our planet – climate change. As one of its key goals to address climate change, the Maine Climate Council Plan has identified the need to expand state public lands to 30% by 2030. LD 983 will help us to do that. The conservation of our forests, our agricultural lands, wetlands and salt marshes will serve to both absorb and sequester carbon and protect biodiversity.

If ever there has been a compelling case for the need for public lands for recreation and peace of mind, it is the COVID pandemic of 2020. The safest place for any of us to be this past year has been outdoors, in rural, socially distanced landscapes where we can hike, fish, kayak, go birding, etc. Where I live on the Pemaquid peninsula the public lands which were supported with Land for Maine's Future funding were visited like they've never been visited before. Parking lots at conservation land sites such as Dodge Point have been filled to overflowing for months on end, with many people discovering them for the first time. Out of state people from urban communities came to Maine in droves to escape the pandemic, happy to quarantine. Folks with summer homes here showed up in March and stayed until November. Parents with schoolchildren at home were eager to hit the local trails to get their kids out of the house. This desire to access public lands is not going away. If anything, this is a critical time to expand land conservation, for our public lands sustain both our physical and mental well being, but also our future.

I've been amazed to learn just how many Land for Maine's Future funded projects there are where I live in Lincoln County. And they're not just recreational sites with hiking trails or boat launches to access local lakes and the ocean. They also include support for preserving working waterfronts and farmlands. Our local commercial fishermen have been supported by no fewer than seven different Land for Maine's Future projects: Roberts Wharf in Boothbay, the Bremen Co-op, the Pemaquid Fishermen's Co-op in Bristol, Maine Fresh Lobster in Bremen, the North End Lobster Co-op in Westport, the South Bristol Co-op, and Wooton's Wharf in Bristol. What an incredible investment this program has made just in helping to preserve an important industry in my local community. Farming and fishing make up a large part of our state's economy, and they are also an important part of our history, our identity, our local culture.

Land for Maine's Future also helped to support our local state park, Colonial Pemaquid, which is one of the most significant historical sites, not only in Maine, but in all of New England. It's not just an important Native American site, it is the location of one of the oldest, and is the northernmost English settlement on our

Atlantic coast. And speaking as someone who has actually worked on the staff of Colonial Pemaquid, I can tell you that it's a park that is desperately in need of additional funding. The reconstructed tower and fort walls were built well over 100 years ago and they're disintegrating. The small, falling apart little building that passes for a museum could be transformed – with a modest investment - into something we could really be proud of, and that would attract many more visitors. It's an extraordinary archaeological site, with much more to uncover.

The bond funds identified in LD 983 are needed to achieve the critically important land conservation goals of the Maine Climate Action Plan, and they, in turn, serve to leverage additional federal and private funding for Lands for Maine Future projects. This then expands the impact of those funds by 50%.

We appreciate the committee's support for this important climate action legislation for Maine.

Respectfully,
Jill Linzee, Co-Chair Climate Change Issue Group
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