

**TESTIMONY OF JAMES A. ST. PIERRE  
MAINE DIRECTOR, RESTORE: THE NORTH WOODS  
In Support of LD 1756**

**An Act Authorizing The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Convey  
Certain Land in Aroostook and Penobscot County  
January 11, 2022**

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the committee, I am Jym St. Pierre, Maine Director of RESTORE: The North Woods, a regional conservation organization that has been active in Maine for thirty years. I have been involved in public lands issues in my home state of Maine for more than 50 years, including in Baxter State Park and the Katahdin region.

The focus of our comments on LD 1756 is on Section 2, which would authorize the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) to convey its interest in more than 2,000 acres of the East Turner Lot to Baxter State Park (BSP). We support this transfer for several reasons, including:

- The property is isolated, impractical, and expensive for BPL to manage.
- There is no deeded public vehicular access to the property. Practical pedestrian public access is already through BSP. I have been on the property numerous times.
- It makes sense to fold this property into BSP so the Park can manage it for public use consistent with existing management of adjoining sanctuary lands within the Park.
- BPL's Central Penobscot Region Management Plan recognizes that the ecological value of the forest on the property is the highest and best use by stipulating that "this entire tract should be considered as unregulated [not to be logged] forest."
- Transferring the property to BSP would provide significant ecological protection for the Park's eastern boundary.
- Transferring the property to BSP would provide significant ecological protection to Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, and would improve public recreation and safety within the Monument.
- It was the original intent to include these lands within BSP in 2006 as part of a land transaction. I was involved with that project.
- BPL would be compensated with funds that can be used to acquire lands in Penobscot County closer to communities and more appropriate for multiple use.
- Both BPL and BSP support this land conveyance.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to **support LD 1756**. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.