



LD 1538: An Act to Close Loopholes in Environmental Regulations

Protect Maine's Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

Maine's water quality and wildlife are an important part of our natural legacy.

Where Maine builds roads, and how they're designed, has a significant impact on the state's water quality, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.

- Roads help spread invasive species.
- Roads contribute to water and soil pollution through chemical contamination.
- Roads threaten wildlife through vehicle and wildlife collisions, habitat alteration and loss, and by fragmenting into too-small pieces the large blocks of connected habitat that animals need to survive.
- A little is a lot—impacts from roads and traffic extend well-beyond the road, sometimes thousands of feet, both on land and in our waterways. Increasingly, transportation planners statewide, nationally, and internationally are seeking to avoid and mitigate these harmful impacts in order to protect natural resources.



Statutory loopholes are allowing some road development in Maine without review that is designed to protect Maine's vital natural resources.

- Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act and Stormwater Law offer an exemption from review for roads developed for forest management, to allow forestry to be conducted without extensive regulatory review.
- Sadly, the exemptions are being used far beyond the original intent. They are being abused, to avoid regulatory review of roads developed to provide access to subdivisions. The roads are initially established as forestry roads and then converted, thus avoiding review.
- Roads designed and built for forest management may be located and/or designed in a manner completely inappropriate for the road uses subdivisions require and the amount of traffic they generate.

By closing the loopholes, the Legislature can help direct and monitor Maine's growth in ways that protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and economic value.

- LD 1538, An Act to Close Loopholes in Environmental Regulations, clarifies that the forest-management exemptions from review do not apply to roads that provide access to a subdivision.
- The bill also addresses clean-water protection by clarifying language and intent relating to the discharge of waste water and management of storm water.
- The bill is sponsored by Representative Joan Welsh.

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LD 1538: An Act to Close Loopholes in Environmental Regulations is supported by the

Environmental Priorities Coalition

We are 26 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations who have joined together for a sixth consecutive year around a Common Environmental Agenda. We represent over 100,000 members in Maine who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that our environment provides for all of us.

Coalition partners include:

American Lung Association in Maine
Appalachian Mountain Club
Atlantic Salmon Federation
Bicycle Coalition of Maine
Conservation Law Foundation
Environmental Health Strategy Center
Environment Maine
Environment Northeast
Friends of Casco Bay
Maine Audubon
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Congress of Lake Associations
Maine Council of Churches
Maine Council of Trout Unlimited
Maine Conservation Voters Education Fund
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Rivers
Natural Resources Council of Maine
Northern Forest Alliance
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine Chapter
RESTORE: The North Woods
Sierra Club, Maine Chapter
The Ocean Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Toxics Action Center