



## 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.

*For more information, please contact Jenn Burns Gray at Maine Audubon [jgray@maineaudubon.org](mailto:jgray@maineaudubon.org) or 207-798-2900*





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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  
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