

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

To: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
From: Karen S. Nadeau, Legislative Analyst
Date: February 23, 2021
Subj: **LD 65 - An Act To Invest in the Stewardship and Management of Properties Acquired with the Proceeds from the Land for Maine's Future Fund or the Public Access to Maine Waters Fund**

SUMMARY

This bill allows a small portion of Land for Maine's Future program bond funds to be used to fund minor capital investments in the stewardship and management of properties acquired with funding from the Land for Maine's Future Fund or the Public Access to Maine Waters Fund, ensuring that these properties are maintained in perpetuity for the purposes for which the properties are conserved.

TESTIMONY

Proponents: *Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; Sierra Club Maine*
Written only: *The Nature Conservancy; Backcountry Hunters and Anglers; Residents of York, Bristol and Morrill*

- This legislation is in direct response to the Maine Land Conservation Task Force #1 recommendation: "Take proper care of our treasured public and private conservation lands and ensure that they meet the needs of Maine people into the future."
- LD would authorize the LMF Board to award a small supplemental grant of LMF bond funds to successful applicants for the long-term stewardship and management of the property.
- The LMF contribution would be capped in statute to no more than 5% of the appraised value of the acquired property.
- It would be a requirement that the supplemental award be held in the applicant's dedicated stewardship account for the specific purpose of stewardship, defense and management of LMF-funded property.
- LD ensures that the original value that merited investment in the project is maintained in the best interest of the people of Maine.
- Stewardship and management are ongoing needs; at times our members have had difficulty accessing public lands due to lack of parking or poor access road conditions; a small capital investment can provide major access benefits.

Opponents: *None*

NFNA: *None*

NOTES

The Maine Land Conservation Task Force was established independently (not by the Legislature or the Governor).

According to the task force report, work began in May 2018 and the task force published its final report in 2019. More information about the task force may be found at the following link:

<https://www.maineconservationtaskforce.com/>

PRELIMINARY FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT: *Not yet received.*