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Testimony by Nancy for GrowSmart Maine  
in support of LD 983 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond  
Conservation, Working Waterfronts, Water Access and Outdoor  
Recreation

April 26, 2021

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Nancy Smith, I live in Monmouth, and serve as Executive Director for GrowSmart Maine.

GrowSmart Maine is a statewide organization devoted building lasting prosperity while protecting the quality of life that defines Maine. We support policies, programs and projects that define and protect the value of our unique built and natural places while supporting long term economic opportunity. Our support for LD 983 comes from this perspective.

Land for Maine's Future is a success in every sense of the word. Through conserving land while allowing for a variety of uses, this program has created benefits for Maine's environment, yes, but also for its communities and economy. ***When I describe the work of GrowSmart Maine, I often reference our organization as the one place where land conservation and downtown revitalization come together across the state. We need to see these not as competing interests, but as opposite sides of the same coin. When we do one well, the other benefits.***

I served as a member of the Land Conservation Task Force representing Maine's developers, and am proud to have helped shape the final report released in January 2019, [Shaping the Next Generation of Land Conservation in Maine](#). Of the key findings,

Action Item 2.A recommends amending the LMF statute or create bond language providing guidance to the Land for Maine's Future Board to fund, in addition to its current programs, "Community Projects" that meet local and regional objectives.

Action Item 3.A Put forward a bold new \$75 million Land for Maine's Future Bond Issue that will provide stable funding for the program over the next five years.

Both of these actions are effectively addressed in this bill, though of course three years later, the \$75 million recommendation is now \$80 million as the need for conserved land and the pressure on pricing for land across the state has escalated since then.

GrowSmart Maine supports both Part A and B of LD 983 as it pairs the much-needed funding with adaptations to the program to ensure it is relevant to every Mainer.

I appreciate the chance to offer our perspective on this bill.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy E. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "N" and a distinct "E" and "S".

Nancy E Smith