MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 226

H.P. 149

House of Representatives, January 21, 2025

An Act to Protect the Cultural Resources and Historical Heritage of Sears Island in Searsport by Extending Conservation Easement Protections

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative PAUL of Winterport.

Cosponsored by Representatives: BISHOP of Bucksport, DANA of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, STROUT of Harrington, WHITE of Guilford, WHITE of Ellsworth, Senator: GROHOSKI of Hancock.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. Sears Island conservation. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Department of Transportation, in collaboration with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the conservation and protection of all lands on Sears Island that are not currently under a permanent conservation easement. These lands are referred to as the "Transportation Parcel" in the buffer conservation easement and must be under the same restrictions as the current adjacent conservation easement areas and must be managed together by the land management entity appointed by the conservation easement holder, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Approval of the land management entity nominated by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust must be granted by the Department of Transportation in a timely manner and may not be withheld without cause.

For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings.

- 1. "Buffer conservation easement" means the easement between the State and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust dated January 22, 2009 and recorded in the Waldo County Registry of Deeds, Book 3289, Page 300.
- 2. "Transportation Parcel" means the parcel of land on Sears Island in the Town of Searsport contained in the buffer conservation easement that has been reserved for port development by the Department of Transportation.

19 SUMMARY

This bill directs the Department of Transportation, in collaboration with the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, to extend the current conservation easement to cover all lands on Sears Island that are not managed under a permanent buffer conservation easement between the State and the trust.