

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1441

S.P. 582

In Senate, April 3, 2025

Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Access in Maine

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BLACK of Franklin.

Cosponsored by Senators: BALDACCI of Penobscot, GUERIN of Penobscot, TIMBERLAKE of Androscoggin.

1 **Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved:** That the Commission to Study the
2 Future of Recreational Access in Maine, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is
3 established.

4 **Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule
5 353, the commission consists of 10 members appointed as follows:

6 1. One landowner who owns a parcel of land greater than 100,000 acres in size in the
7 unorganized territory, appointed by the President of the Senate;

8 2. One member representing an association that represents small woodlot owners,
9 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

10 3. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the commissioner's
11 designee;

12 4. The Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or the commissioner's designee;

13 5. The director of the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation within the Department of
14 Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism or the director's designee;

15 6. One member representing the Maine Professional Guides Association, appointed by
16 the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;

17 7. One member representing a business or business association with substantial
18 operations associated with outdoor recreation in the unorganized territory, appointed by the
19 Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;

20 8. One member representing a snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle trail club, appointed
21 by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;

22 9. One member representing a conservation organization that manages land or
23 conservation easements within the unorganized territory, appointed by the Commissioner
24 of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry; and

25 10. One member representing a statewide organization that represents hunters and
26 anglers, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

27 **Sec. 3. Chair. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and
28 Forestry is the chair of the commission.

29 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
30 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
31 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
32 Council once all appointments have been completed. Notwithstanding Joint Rule 353,
33 within 15 days after appointment of all members, the chair shall call and convene the first
34 meeting of the commission.

35 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:

36 1. Solicit and explore strategies that could provide private landowners with financial
37 incentives to create, maintain and expand recreational access to important corridors and
38 destinations;

39 2. Solicit input from a broad range of individuals and businesses involved in outdoor
40 and traditional recreational activities in the unorganized territory, landowners in the

1 unorganized territory, outdoor recreation and public access policy experts and the general
2 public to understand the history and value of and issues associated with the State's tradition
3 of public access to public and private property in the unorganized territory;

4 3. Develop an assessment of the current and future status of public access to public
5 and private property, with particular attention to the unorganized territory and regions, trail
6 corridors and natural resource destinations of high interest for current and future outdoor
7 and traditional recreational activities; and

8 4. Recommend actions and policies that may be implemented to better promote and
9 protect public access to public and private property in both organized municipalities and
10 the unorganized territory.

11 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the
12 Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall provide staffing to the
13 commission within existing resources and may seek staffing and financial support from
14 other state agencies and private entities to accomplish the work of the commission.

15 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than December 3, 2025, the commission
16 shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested
17 legislation, for presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation
18 and Forestry. The Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry is
19 authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of
20 the 132nd Legislature.

21 **Sec. 8. Extension. Resolved:** That, if the commission requires a limited extension
22 of time to complete the study and make a report, it may apply to the Legislative Council,
23 which may grant an extension.

24 SUMMARY

25 This resolve establishes the Commission to Study the Future of Recreational Access in
26 Maine, which is directed to assess current and future public access to public and private
27 lands in the unorganized territory as well as other areas of high interest in the State. The
28 commission is required to submit a report and suggested legislation by December 3, 2025
29 to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, which is
30 authorized to report out legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of
31 the 132nd Legislature.