

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S.4784, A BILL TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT IN THE STATE OF MAINE, TO IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL MONUMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2022**

---

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 4784, a bill to modify the boundary of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the State of Maine, to improve public access to the National Monument, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 4784 with amendments.

S. 4748 would add an additional 43,000 acres to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument (Monument). Located to the west of the East Branch of the Penobscot River and stretching south of the present Monument boundary, the proposed addition would enable the National Park Service to provide a dedicated public route into the Monument from the south. The southward extension of the Monument boundary would also improve access from the gateway communities of Millinocket, East Millinocket, and Medway. The bill includes provisions addressing hunting, fishing, the gathering of fiddlehead ferns, and establishing administrative and visitor facilities outside of Monument boundaries.

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument was established by Proclamation 9476 on August 24, 2016, by President Obama. The proclamation enshrined approximately 87,500 acres within a larger landscape already conserved by public and private efforts. The Monument contains extraordinary natural and cultural landscapes including the mountains, woods, and waters east of Baxter State Park, where the east branch of the Penobscot River and its tributaries run freely. The scenery, geology, flora, fauna, and night skies continue to attract people to this area. Native Americans still cherish these resources. Expanding access to this resource continues to fulfill the promise that public lands are for everyone.

Section 3(g) provides for the gathering by hand of fiddlehead ferns, authorizes the Superintendent of the National Monument to determine if the activity adversely affects resources, and to limit the gathering of fiddlehead ferns in accordance with existing regulations. We appreciate that gathering fiddlehead ferns is a long-standing local practice. We propose that this section be amended to clarify that this authorized use would be limited to non-commercial use and consumption. Implementation of this section will require that inventory and monitoring protocols be in place to ensure that resources are not adversely affected.

Section 4(a) authorizes the Secretary to expend donated or appropriated funds to acquire or lease essential facilities for the administration of the National Monument and visitor services outside the boundaries, but within the vicinity, of the National Monument. The Department supports this

provision as it will enable the National Park Service to develop essential facilities in proximity to the park without disturbing the Monument's fundamental resources, but recommends technical amendments for clarity in this section.

In addition, the Department believes that the definitions in the legislation should be clarified to ensure that all provisions apply both to the Monument and the land added to the Monument by the legislation, as appropriate. We would be happy to work with the Committee to develop these amendments.

Chairman King, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.