

OPPOSE

LD 220 – An Act to Ban the United Nations Agenda 21 in Maine

Sponsor: Representative LONG of Sherman.

Co-Sponsors: Representatives CRAFTS of Lisbon, GIFFORD of Lincoln, JACKSON of Oxford, JOHNSON of Greenville, LIBBY of Waterboro, STANLEY of Medway, THERIAULT of Madawaska, TIMBERLAKE of Turner, WILLETTE of Mapleton, and Senator JACKSON of Aroostook

Summary: This bill prohibits the State or any political subdivision of the State from adopting or implementing policies originating in the United Nations Agenda 21 and prohibits the State or any political subdivision from entering into agreements or financial arrangements with nonprofit organizations with any connection with Agenda 21.

Explanation: Agenda 21 is a non-binding, voluntary list of ideas for how nations can promote sustainable economic development and help alleviate poverty. It was developed at the United Nation's Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and was adopted by 178 governments, including the U.S. under President George H. W. Bush. It is not a treaty; it is not legally binding; it provides no authority to any entity to limit anyone's rights; and it has no bearing on local or state land-use decisions in the United States or any other country. It is basically a laundry list of concepts related to sustainable economic development—which generally is considered to mean meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

But LD 220 suggests that Agenda 21 is something much more ominous. Indeed, one can find websites describing Agenda 21 as a global conspiracy aimed at controlling all human activities and essentially destroying life and our country as we know it. The conservative radio host Glenn Beck has written a book of *fiction* titled *Agenda 21* that paints a dark future in which Agenda 21 destroys America. Similarly, LD 220 seems to be based on a fiction that menacing connections exist between the efforts of local land trusts, planning boards, and state policies here in Maine to Agenda 21 and the United Nations. But this is patently untrue.

LD 220 is not simply a bill that should be dismissed because it rests on a fictional foundation; rather, NRCM believes it should be defeated because it is a direct attack on constructive efforts by Maine citizens to protect the character of their communities. Some supporters of LD 220 attack land trusts and everything they have done to conserve land in Maine, suggesting a traceable connection to Agenda 21. Quite the contrary, Maine's land trusts are conserving working farms, public access to beaches, open space, snowmobile and hiking trails, and other outdoor recreation sites that benefit Maine communities and are supported by Maine people.

LD 220 also should be rejected because Agenda 21 promotes important ideas that deserve the attention of the world's governments. Within its long list of concepts, Agenda 21 encourages dialogue about reducing global poverty, providing access by the poor to fresh water and sanitation, improving the rights of women in developing countries, encouraging sustainable land use practices, reducing threats from cross-boundary air pollution, curbing the disposal of radioactive waste in the world's oceans, encouraging international scientific cooperation on environmental research. These are the sorts of topics and ideas that 178 nations endorsed in 1992 as being worthy for consideration, as voluntary, nonbinding, and yet important concepts—and they are important concepts. That's a fact, not fiction.

NRCM Opposes LD 220.