

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
BUDGET
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
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April 28, 2016

Ms. Patricia Montanio, Director
NOAA Fisheries
Office of Habitat Conservation
1315 East-West Highway
Room 14828
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Montanio:

We are writing in support of Mr. Paul Dest's nomination for the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation's 2016 Dr. Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award. Paul is the director of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve located in Wells, Maine.

Under Paul's leadership, the Wells Reserve has grown into a 20-person research, education, and conservation center with a commitment to coastal environment protection. As director, Paul has led efforts to construct the Maine Coastal Ecology Center Laboratory, to make the Wells Reserve the first 100% solar-powered nonprofit in Maine, and to advance the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative to establish a 19,000-acre conservation zone.

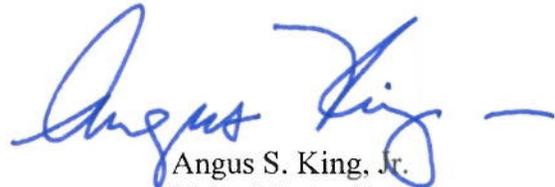
For more than three decades, Paul has demonstrated compassion and dedication to protecting coastal and upland areas. He is highly respected among staff, colleagues, and state leaders, serving as an active volunteer in conservation and as a member of the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association Executive Committee since 2002. Throughout his impressive career, Paul has made lasting contributions to conservation and protection efforts across Maine and New England.

Thank you for your consideration of Paul Dest for this award. I encourage NOAA's careful review of his nomination, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify Katie Seelen (Collins) at (202) 224-2523 and Adam Lachman (King) at (202) 224-5344 when a final decision is made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator