

Testimony of Charles Driza
Re; Alewife Introduction to St Croix River

My name is Charles Driza and I am the owner of Leen's Lodge in Grand Lake Stream Maine. I purchased Leen's Lodge in May of 2001. Leen's is a traditional sporting camp that has been in existence since 1940. I am a Mechanical Engineer by trade, and after many years in the corporate world, I decided to follow my dream of owning a sporting camp in the wilderness of Maine. We offer fishing and bird hunting as the primary activities to be enjoyed at the lodge.

The smallmouth bass and landlocked salmon fishing are the bread and butter of the lodge's business. We have guests from all over the United States coming to Leen's Lodge to enjoy the unique blend of wilderness and fabulous fishing in a location that is easy to access by car or plane. We also have the largest concentration of registered Maine guides living in the area of Grand Lake Stream. The local lodges, guides, and all of our supply chain personnel and businesses rely on the revenue that the fishing brings to our area.

Allowing alewives into our watershed will have a devastating affect on our fishery as demonstrated by what happened to Spednic Lake. The science demonstrates that alewives were never an indigenous species. The reports and studies that do claim that alewives are native to our waters are clearly advocacy pieces with no basis in science. The introduction of alewives into the system will have a devastating biological affect on the fisheries and an adverse economic impact on all those that play a role in the fishing industry. The issue must be studied more thoroughly before any change of this magnitude takes place. Many will feel the loss of jobs and revenue if we do not stop the alewives now. I support the immediate passage of LD 800 to preserve the fisheries in the St Croix watershed. Thank you for your consideration in this urgent matter.