

My name is Louis Cataldo, I'm the 1st Selectman of Grand Lake Stream. I'm a 4th Generation Master Maine Guide, My family settled on the shores of Big Lake around 1850. I am testifying in favor of LD-800.

During the last Alewife invasion, back in the 80's when the Canadian Government dynamited the ledges at Salmon Falls and created an elaborate fishway that allowed Alewives to get up around and over the very steep and very turbulent water at Salmon Falls, I was guiding 50-60 days a year on Big Lake during that time .

Several years after we started seeing large schools of Alewives all over Big Lake we noticed smallmouth Bass numbers were dropping and the land locked Salmon we caught were not looking very healthy . When you examined the stomach content of the Salmon there were no smelt present. Landlocked Salmon need Rainbow Smelt in their diet in order to flourish .

The fishery was declining fast. We contacted Maine IFTW fishery Biologist who have always worked very closely with the Grand Lake Guides, They immediately came to a meeting and told us what was causing the Problem. In great detail, they explained to us that these Sea Run Alewives were coming into our lakes and competing with the young of the year smallmouth bass and rainbow smelt for food. These very knowledgeable and dedicated Fishery Biologists explained that the Alewives ate the same food as the young of the year smallmouth bass and Rainbow smelt. They also told us that if our smallmouth bass did not reach a

certain length and weight their 1st summer they would not survive through the winter. They live off fat reserves during the winter months and feed very little .

In a nut shell the young of the year Alewife was out competing the young of the year smallmouth bass for food. They strongly recommended that we go to the legislature and get approval to keep the Alewives permanently blocked in the two dams that they had already blocked on the St. Croix River. They told us about the research they had done on Spednic Lake on the East Branch of the St. Croix drainage and how the bass fishery there was almost completely wiped out. They told us that Big Lake was a few years away from the same fishery collapse as Spednic.

By this time we knew Big Lake was in big trouble, Big Lake has been the go to Lake for the Grand Lake Stream Guides for the last sixty plus years. Its a ten thousand acre lake, two and a half miles from our village. The fishery got so bad during this time, hardly any guides days were spent on Big Lake.

After the alewives were stopped , it took several years before the Bass started to recover. By this time it was the early ninties and we got the legislation passed to block the alewives from entering the upper St. Croix drainage. We were lucky, but Spednic Lake was not. In order to get the Spednic fishery to recover, bass transfers had to be done by guides and the lake had to closed to the taking of Bass. After thirty-five years of recovery it has come back somewhat. It probably will never be what it was because now there is a landlocked alewife population interfering

with the delicate ecosystem that all our inland lakes have. When Alewives come into the freshwater to spawn , some of their offspring do not leave the lakes in the fall , thus creating a landlocked population . This creates a problem that is impossible to deal with . Our fisheries may already be doomed and we just don't know it yet .

In a study by the Maine office of tourism and Maine DIFWS freshwater fishing has a total economic output of 264.5 million dollars in our state . Ninety Six percent of fishermen pursue freshwater species. Smallmouth bass were tied with brook trout as the most pursued species by non-residents anglers and is the second most pursued fish by residents of the state. About 15 million dollars was spent on fishing in the Washington country area in 2013. The entire economy in Northern Washington County is built around these fisheries .

We have a report from an independent Scientist that states that the flagg report is an advocacy piece for the introduction of Alewives and very important information that should have been included in the report was left out . This scientist also reports that the Willis report also has serious flaws. He wondered why Spednic Lake was not part of Willis's study . Neither of these reports are published and peer reviewed.

Our information shows that Alewives could not get up over the three natural barriers on the lower St. Croix river before dams were built. Alewives are not native to the upper St. Croix Lakes. One of the lies being said is that the Alewives don't hurt inland

fisheries. Read what fishery biologist around the great lakes say. They had to stock fish that would eat the Alewives, because the Alewives wiped out the other forage fish populations. The state of Vermont calls the alewife there most feared invasive bait fish in their 2015 fishing regulation book. They state that "Alewives may displace smelt and other native forage fish through competition for food and space resources."

Trout and salmon that feed extensively on Alewives may also suffer reproductive failure. Shouldn't findings from other states raise a red flag. In our state all the Federal and State Science that is being conducted is Pro Alewife. They don't care about our inland water. All the info they put out is done to get these alewife runs introduced regardless of the damage to our inland fisheries.

How can we continue down this road without conducting the proper studies by independent scientists. These studies will show that alewives are not native to the upper St. Croix and that alewives will hurt our inland fisheries. We are the stewards of these waters. We are responsible to pass this way of life on to the next generation. So make no mistake. We will fight for these waters for the great people of the state of Maine until we get this terrible mistake reversed. We have no choice.

The pro alewife crowd keeps saying that bass aren't native to these waters. Well our records indicate that smallmouth bass have been in these waters for about seventy-five years. These fish have been here long enough so the sporting camps and guides have built their businesses and lives around them. Bass fishermen

account for about eighty percent of our bussiness today.

Please stop this Alewife Intoduction, insist that the proper studies are done and done by independant scientists. These studies should have been done long before any of this was tried. As I said earlyer , we will never give up protecting these fisheries . We owe that much to the next generation .

Thank You