



Maine Conservation Voters
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**OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF MAINE CONSERVATION VOTERS ON
LD 800 AN ACT TO PREVENT PASSAGE OF ALEWIVES
THROUGH THE GRAND FALLS DAM ON THE ST. CROIX RIVER
BEFORE THE MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
APRIL 27, 2015**

Good morning Senator Baker, Representative Kumiega and Members of the Marine Resources Committee, I am Beth Ahearn, political director of Maine Conservation Voters (MCV). MCV opposes **LD 800, AN ACT TO PREVENT PASSAGE OF ALEWIVES THROUGH THE GRAND FALLS DAM ON THE ST. CROIX RIVER.**

- 1. The alewife population in the St. Croix River crashed.** Since the closing of fish passageways on the St. Croix at Woodland and Grand Falls, the alewife population fell from a high of 2.6 million fish in 1987 to only 1,300 returning adults in 2007. The alewives need access to the broader reaches of this international watershed so they can spawn.
- 2. Alewives are a critical component of Maine's ecology.** They are a valuable source of nutrients and are an important food source for a wide variety of fish, birds, and mammals, including: salmon, trout, striped bass, bluefish, tuna, cod, haddock, ospreys, eagles, otters and seals.
- 3. Alewives are economically valuable.** They are an important bait source for Maine's lobster industry. Commercial alewife fishermen generate substantial income from the harvesting of alewives each spring. Across the state, Native Americans and dozens of Maine municipalities have commercial harvesting rights to alewives on approximately 40 coastal streams and rivers.

The St. Croix was closed to alewives for too long. The St. Croix alewife population is starting to recover after being denied access to historic spawning habitat. In 2014, their numbers reached 27,036 fish. Let the St. Croix remain open to their spawning grounds, for the good of the fishery as well as our economy. Thank you for your time.