

Re: LD 1111 (HP 707)

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

Please support LD 1111. It will provide a reasonable common sense approach for planning water availability and usage for many small businesses, farms, municipalities and even for supplying adequate water and waste management to housing developments for young families.

Periodic drought and unusual weather patterns, such as Maine is currently experiencing, can have a devastating effect, even in the short term, on the quality and quantity of water. Thus, a limit on large scale water extraction to a maximum of 3 years by “water companies” will help protect from large scale extraction of water that leaves the area.

Water extraction corporations are frequently venture capital and /or multinational, and have great diversity and deep financial reserves. They plan to extract, transport, and sell Maine’s water over long time periods placing smaller local endeavors at great risk. These long term contracts for water extraction have detrimental effects on the local communities planning and resiliency.

Western Maine is already having water problems in areas where long term corporate water extraction is occurring. 14% of the 194 respondents in the town of Brownfield reported that their wells have gone dry in the last 10 years (Town of Brownfield Comprehensive Plan, 2023).

At a Fryeburg town meeting in 2019 concerns were expressed about the long term effects of a contract allowing 45 years of water extraction. The hydrologist responded that “climate trends may decrease aquifer

levels”. Despite a contract for 45 years of continuous extraction, a “more detailed model” was needed. Significantly, private wells were not taken into account. (Conway Daily Sun, 1/15/19). Since then, levels of the Lovewell and Round Ponds in Fryeburg have continued to decrease. In neighboring Sweden, anecdotal reports of dug wells going dry during the summer are becoming more frequent.

Many aspects of a community’s activities can be affected by allowing long term water extraction such as waste management, land values, municipal income, out door activities such as fishing, bird watching, tourism and housing development.

Requiring local approval is vital since the community provides the “boots on the ground” perspective and will be the first affected by the decreasing water levels from large scale long term water extraction, particularly when compounded by changing climate trends and unusual weather patterns. Local approval is vital for transparency and governance.

With documented drought and unusual water patterns, exceedingly long-term large-scale extraction of water should be prohibited. Long term large scale water contracts, such as 45, 15 or even 5 years, place Maine at risk. Especially for those who need a guarantee of water availability in a constantly changing environment in order to prosper and plan for the future.

Please support LD 1111.

Thank you.

Bruce Taylor
Sweden, 04040

