

Testimony in favor of LD 1473: An Act to Protect Certain Unfiltered Drinking Water Sources.

To: Senate Chair Brenner, House Chair Gramlich, and Members of the The Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

Dear Fellow Mainers,

My name is John Strong and I am a resident of Auburn. I am writing to you today to express my strong support for LD 1473, and to urge you to pass it.

Very few lakes and ponds that are sources of drinking water for communities in the United States have received a waiver from the EPA from having to filter their water before usage--in recognition of their natural purity. Of these, however, nearly one-quarter are in Maine. I feel fortunate and honored to be residing in such a state, and I feel especially privileged to be living on the shores of one of those still-pure bodies of water--Lake Auburn. So I will speak about its importance to me.

Just after moving to our present house (23 years ago), I was invited to apply for a prestigious professorship at a major university out of state. I was sorely tempted to accept, but, after much thought, I decided to stay in Maine. A major reason was Lake Auburn. As I wrote in my letter explaining my reasons to the university's hiring committee for turning them down: "At any other time, I might consider your kind offer, but we have just moved to a house in the woods, whose water we drink [at that time, we pumped our water directly from the lake]and whose loons we watch." But times change. Alas, now, we no longer drink Lake Auburn water, but decided to have a well dug a few years ago. We do still enjoy watching the loons, but chicks are no longer born annually.

As we all know, bodies of water such as Lake Auburn are threatened. Maintenance of our filtration-exemptions does not happen automatically. In my family, we have always done what we can where we live to not hurt the water quality: we don't use pesticides or fertilizer, or cut down trees, or go swimming in the lake, etc. But the problem is, of course, much larger.

It takes diligence, and ongoing protection--not only of the lake itself, but of its watershed. Senator Rotundo's bill, LD 1473, by exempting land in sensitive watersheds from the development now permitted by LD2003, will go a long way towards preserving Lake Auburn, and all the other bodies of water like it in Maine. It will thereby keep up the state's reputation as a "Pure-water Land," and spare its residents the new tax burden of having to build expensive filtration plants.

Sincerely, and with thanks for all you do,

John Strong

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Auburn
LD 1473

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