

## Testimony in favor of LD 1473

### An Act to Protect Certain Unfiltered Drinking Water Sources Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senate Chair Brenner, House Chair Gramlich and Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Alicia Rea. I am a second year law student at the University of Maine School of Law, the upcoming editor-in-chief of the Ocean and Coastal Law Journal, and a ratepayer to the Lewiston Water District.

I am here today to urge you to pass LD 1473 to protect the watersheds of drinking water sources that have been granted EPA filtration avoidance waivers.

While writing for the Ocean and Coastal Law Journal this year, I researched drinking water filtration avoidance waivers in Maine and possible ways to preserve pure drinking water for Mainers. This bill, LD 1473, would apply to nine municipalities across Maine, of varying size and structure, who have pure enough water to qualify for a prized filtration avoidance waiver. While my writing focused a bit more narrowly on the governance structure surrounding the Lake Auburn drinking water system, my research led me to better understand the other unfiltered drinking water sources in the state, and the need to preserve these waters. LD 1473 targets this preservation by exempting lots within these critical watersheds.

This bill will apply to nine water systems in Maine, reaching far beyond the shores of Lake Auburn. As climate change threatens these systems, the communities surrounding them need to be able to focus on education and mitigation efforts. Within the Lake Auburn Watershed, protective measures have already been taken to combat algae blooms and educate the public on maintenance of our valued resource. Such protection should be extended to all unfiltered sources in Portland, Raymond, Casco, Sebago, Frye Island, Bangor, Brewer, Damariscotta, Presque Isle, Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, Auburn, Poland, and Lewiston.

Besides preserving our natural resources, LD 1473 will also help these communities to avoid costly filtration implementation. Compliance with the federal filtration requirement would come with both a capital cost and an annual operating budget, increasing taxes and water rates for citizens in these communities. Filtration avoidance remains not only a viable strategy, but the most tax and ratepayer focused option for these watersheds and water systems.

Please vote Ought To Pass on LD 1473. Thank you for your time and commitment to the environment and natural resources of Maine.

Respectfully,  
Alicia Rea  
HD 93, SD 21