

Dear Members of the **Environment and Natural Resources Committee**,

My name is Rachel Fischer, and I write to you as a concerned citizen of Portland, a soon-to-be attorney in the state of Maine, and a professor of Environmental Law at Saint Joseph's College. I am writing to express my strong support for LD 646 because Maine's waters—and the communities that rely on them—are at risk from stormwater pollution.

As a coastal resident, environmentalist, and avid outdoor recreationalist, I see firsthand how stormwater runoff impacts our waters. Every time it rains, pollution washes off roads, parking lots, and other hard surfaces, carrying any pollution on those surfaces which may include bacteria, chemicals, and excess nutrients into our rivers, bays, and coastal waters. This pollution isn't just an environmental issue—it affects our way of life, our economy, and our health.

For those of us who depend on clean water for our livelihoods, the stakes are high. When clam flats close due to bacteria contamination, harvesters lose critical income. When algal blooms smother clam flats, they threaten marine life and disrupt fisheries. And when chemicals such as PFAS flush into our waters, they can make our food unsafe to eat and harm aquatic life.

LD 646 is a critical step toward better stormwater management. By creating a study commission, Maine can develop informed, effective strategies to prevent stormwater pollution before it does more harm. Addressing this issue now will save money in the long run—preventing pollution is far more cost-effective than trying to restore damaged waters.

I urge you to support LD 646 and take action to protect Maine's waters for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Fischer

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