Maine Rivers

OUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT, RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE ECOLOGICAL HEALTH OF MAINE'S RIVER SYSTEMS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LANDIS HUDSON

PROJECT MANAGER

MATT STREETER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHUCK VERRILL
PRESIDENT

GREG D'AUGUSTINE
SECRETARY

CURTIS BOHLEN
TREASURER

NICK BENNETT
DAVID COURTEMANCH
SUSAN P. DAVIES
DAN GAYER
DAN KUSNIERZ
RICK LAWRENCE
JEFF REARDON
SHARRI VENNO

P.O. BOX 782
YARMOUTH, ME 04096

PH: 207-847-9277

CONTACT@MAINERIVERS.ORG

WWW.MAINERIVERS.ORG

February 26, 2025

Re: LD 646, Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share our support for LD 646.

Stormwater represents the largest uncontrolled source of pollution into Maine's waters and this is a huge problem in many areas. Our rivers and streams are degraded by this pollution, so are our estuaries and bays. The negative impacts of uncontrolled storm water pollution can range from long-term habitat degradation to closed beaches. There certainly are impacts on human health as well as the health of fish and animal populations.

The problems are widespread, as noted in "Maine Combined Sewer Overflow 2023 Statue Report" from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (p. 3):

- CSOs discharge untreated combined sewage into ten major watersheds in Maine. The watersheds include seven (7) rivers and their tributaries (Androscoggin, Kennebec, Machias, Penobscot, St. Croix, St. John, and Saco) and three (3) bays (Casco Bay, Frenchman Bay, and Penobscot Bay). The receiving waters vary in size from the Atlantic Ocean all the way down to a handful of small streams. The latter are the focus of DEP's effort to eliminate CSO discharge to sensitive receiving waters. Sensitive receiving waters tend to be smaller streams, brooks, or tidal estuaries with low dilution factors.

Managing storm water is a critically important aspect of maintaining clean and healthy waters, but it is challenging for many towns and cities. There often are significant costs associated with taking action. Yet the risks are great—runoff is a source of pollution that often brings pesticides, oil, sediment and animal waste to our rivers, streams and coastal waters. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus associated with storm water pollution can cause algae blooms in streams and rivers, including blooms that are known to be harmful to swimmers or pets. Clam flats and oyster beds require clean water and are at great risk to pollution from storm water.

The increasing intensity of weather events will exacerbate flooding and increase storm water runoff, to the detriment of our waterways.

We therefore strongly support the creation of a Commission to assess unregulated storm water pollution, and look forward to helping in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Landis Hudson
Executive Director