



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,
From: **Becky Bartovics, Legislative Team**
Date: 28 February 2025
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 646: Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution.**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and the members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am submitting the following testimony on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge an "ought to pass" report on L.D. 646: Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution.

More intense storms, like those experienced last winter, deliver more rain in shorter periods of time, overwhelming drainage systems while taking out roads, bridges and causing increased erosion. As a result, pollution from stormwater is increasing and is often unregulated. Stormwater runs off roads and roofs, carrying toxins into Maine waters that lead to beach closures and dangerous algal blooms. Maine has taken steps to address stormwater pollution and damage, but more needs to be done. Precautions will certainly improve local community results, and prevent exponential growth of toxins entering Maine's waters.

We urge the Legislature to convene a study commission to quickly identify steps to strengthen Maine's stormwater regulations. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prioritized revising rules to better regulate stormwater and mitigate pollution consistent with Maine Won't Wait, the state's climate action plan. DEP convened a Stormwater Advisory Group in 2023-24 to discuss potential updates and actions, but it is hampered by budget and staff constraints. Additional data and input from a broader array of stakeholders is critical to identifying next steps and the level of staffing and funding required to implement changes. This Resolve creates a Stormwater Study Commission to

build on the Advisory Group's work, evaluate current laws, and recommend new strategies to prevent and treat stormwater damage and pollution.

For these reasons we urge an "ought to pass" report on L.D. 646. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Becky Bartovics
Sierra Club Maine Chapter Volunteer

<https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/sources-and-solutions-stormwater>

<https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Fish-Need-to-Move-Migration-Lesson-Plan%20.pdf>