



30 Mile River Watershed Association
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RE: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **LD 646**

Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution

March 3, 2025

Dear Chair Tepler, Chair Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

The 30 Mile River Watershed Association strongly supports LD 646. The watershed that we protect encompasses over 20 lakes and ponds in Central Maine. We are a coalition of seven towns, nine lake associations and two conservation organizations. Our mission is to work as a community for clean and healthy lakes, ponds and streams in our watershed.

Three out of the last four years, the watershed's largest lake, Androscoggin, turned pea-soup green with a lake-wide algal bloom. Like many lakes in Maine, Androscoggin Lake's water quality is threatened by phosphorus from polluted stormwater runoff. Phosphorus is a nutrient found in soil, septic waste, animal waste, and fertilizers. It feeds algae, and very small increases in phosphorus can cause algae populations to increase and water clarity to decline. Higher levels can cause algal blooms.

Polluted stormwater runoff is one of the biggest threats to our lakes. That threat has grown tremendously in recent years as a result of increased development and much more intense storms, driven by climate change. Maine's stormwater regulations have not kept pace with these growing threats.

In 2023, two historic rain events each delivered more than 5" of rain to our area in under 24 hours. This led to massive road washouts, severe damage to infrastructure, unprecedented repair costs for our towns, and an enormous amount of pollution flowing into our lakes. Our waters are showing signs of stress from these events, and we have documented declining water quality.

The communities in our watershed, and throughout Maine, depend upon the health of these lakes for our local economy, our tax base and our quality of life. They are one of our most valuable natural resources and losing them would truly be devastating to our state. This commission will serve a critical need, identifying next steps that Maine can take to address unregulated stormwater pollution and better protect our precious waters.

Sincerely,

Lidie Robbins
Executive Director