

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

RE: LD 832—An Act to Provide Funds to Reduce the Debt of the Vassalboro Sanitary District

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Dawn-Marie Nichols. I am a customer of the Vassalboro Sanitary District and a resident of Vassalboro, Maine . I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of LD 832, a bill to provide one-time funding to the Vassalboro Sanitary District for debt reduction.

The astronomical increases in the Vassalboro Sanitary District fees and rates are debilitating to the finances of so many homes in Vassalboro. For my household, we are always at the minimum water usage, making our sewer bill on the minimum end of the scale, yet I pay more for my sewer than I do property taxes! We are a household of 3 with 2 full time working adults and a live at home college student. We are constantly making sacrifices in our lifestyle, and cutting things in our budget to try to adjust to the huge increases in the cost of being connected to the Vassalboro Sanitary District. I've picked up a 2nd job to help offset the cost of the sewer bills to our household. And with no end in sight on paying off this enormous debt it makes the outlook seem rather bleak. We have seen several neighbors putting their homes up for sale. Neighbors on a fixed income that simply no longer have enough money to live in their home with these additional costs. Another neighbor has recently lost her husband. I know from helping my own mother after the loss of my father, that my neighbor will lose a significant amount of income to her household with the loss of her husband's social security. I truly fear that with this income loss, being able to sustain the large sewer bill (even at minimum usage) will be too much for her, and this will be what drives her out of state to live the remainder of her days with one of her adult children, instead of in the home where she and her husband built their life and their family. It literally breaks my heart to see our senior neighbors struggling so much due to things out of their control.

Before all of these increases, due to forced system upgrades, there were already many households unable to keep up with their sewer bills. These increases are making that a larger percentage.

The 200 households connected to the Vassalboro Sanitary District simply should not bare the burden of this exorbitant system upgrade!

I urge you to vote for this bill which would provide much needed debt reduction to the 200 customers that rely on the services of the Vassalboro Sewer district.

Thank you for your time and I am willing to answer any questions the committee may have.

Dawn-Marie Nichols
(207) 592-6609
309 Cemetery Street
Vassalboro, ME 04989

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Vassalboro
LD 832

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