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LD 531: Dam Ownership
Sponsored by: Nina Milliken D-Blue Hill
Committee: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

In Favor of the Bill

My name is Marc Restuccia, I am currently the president of the Toddy Pond Association. I would also like to speak for the lakefront property owners on Toddy Pond and my town of Orland Maine. I wish to strongly endorse passage of LD 62.

For over one hundred years Toddy Pond has provided superb wildlife habitat, bountiful recreational opportunities and an economic powerhouse for the towns of Blue Hill, Orland, Penobscot and Surry. Originally conceived as a water source for the paper mill in Bucksport, the pond has outlived that paper mill and is now a vital resource for our communities.

The pond is the home of numerous fish species as well as loons, eagles, cormorants and other bird species as well as beavers, foxes, deer and other animals. For over one hundred years this wildlife has relied on the waters of Toddy Pond to live and raise their young. Would such wildlife adapt to a new environment without the pond? No doubt, but this body of water has become as much a part of the local environment as Great Pond Mountain or Blue Hill. Allowing it to disappear would be a truly cataclysmic change in the local environment

The boat launch on Toddy, located on Route 1 in Orland is one of the busiest in Hancock County. Last year our Courtesy Boat Inspection program inspected over 1000 boats and we know that's only a percentage of all boats launched and recovered at the landing. Boaters come to Toddy, not only from the adjacent towns, but from all over Maine and indeed from a great many states beyond Maine and New England. Numerous fishing derbies are held on Toddy, both summer and winter providing much appreciated wholesome and family friendly recreational opportunities. Truly, Toddy Pond is a much beloved 4 season recreational resource for Hancock County and indeed the entire state of Maine.

Toddy Pond serves as a powerful economic engine for the region as well. Property tax support by the lakefront property owners significantly impacts the tax revenues for all four towns

adjacent to the pond. But beyond that, the impact on local businesses is immense. The TPA Outreach Committee has, using some of the same methods as the University of Maine did when they looked at the impact of Maine lakes on the local economy, estimated that the net economic benefit to the towns, and the state, is on the order of tens of millions of dollars. The loss of such a potent economic engine would be devastating to the towns of Blue Hill, Orland, Penobscot and Surry. Additionally, the waters of both Alamoosook Lake and Toddy Pond are vital resources for our local Fire Departments.

Finally, this is a grassroots effort, by the people and towns most affected by the status of the dams on Toddy Pond and Alamoosook Lake to find local solutions to a problem which is not unique to these ponds/lakes and dams. All across Maine there are aging dams that, having outlived their original purpose, continue to bring significant benefit to the people living on the waters they impound, and the towns adjoining those water bodies. The State of Maine should embrace and encourage efforts such as this to solve local problems at the local level. This can-do attitude and effort reflects all of what's best about our state and its people, and we encourage the legislature to support this bill.

Thank you.

Respectfully

Marc C. Restuccia

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