

March 31, 2025

To: Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Chairs: Senator Denise Tepler and Representative Victoria Doudera

RE: Testimony in support of LD 531, HP0350 An Act Regarding Dam Ownership as amended by Rep. Milliken's amendment at the March 31, 2025 public hearing

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

We urge you to vote "Ought to Pass as amended" on L.D. 531.

Bucksport Mill LLC petition for release of Dam Ownership leaves the abutting communities in need of a solution the release would cause. L.D. 531 as amended would establish the Toddy Pond Watershed Management District and the Alamoosook Lake Watershed Management District, quasi-municipal Maine corporations, for the purpose of acquiring and operating the Toddy Pond dam infrastructure and Alamoosook dam infrastructure respectively.

The Orland River watershed including Toddy Pond, Alamoosook Lake and the waterway between them is home to Atlantic salmon, American eel, river herring, shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, sea lamprey, rainbow smelt, tomcod, and American shad and abuts the Great Pond Mountain wildland. Establishing ownership through quasi-municipal Watershed management districts is consistent with local control and will allow the four towns to jointly improve the watershed to the benefit of all.

We therefore urge the committee to amend L. D. 531 with Representative Milliken's amendment and pass L. D. 531 as amended and report the bill out as "Ought to Pass as amended".

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