Gaye Marie Rogers
Penobscot
LD 531

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LD 531, Environment and Natural Resources, March 31, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Members of the Committee,

I offered the lone opposing testimony at the hearing on March 31st, however I am by far not the only person with deep reservations about LD 5631. Many voices have been effectively silenced throughout this process when our objections have neither been honored nor seriously considered. I was asked at the hearing if I had language to suggest and while I am not a lawyer, I have suggestions.

If as stated in public testimony on March 31st, Toddy Pond is an important economic driver for the region, it follows that the surrounding towns have an interest in maintaining the water level. All taxpayers must share that burden equally. The bill should not create two classes of taxpayers, one with the option to opt out of any financial responsibility and those without a choice.

All taxpayers across the four participating towns should be required to cover a percentage of the costs of routine dam maintenance and operation only. That sum, presented at the public hearing, was said to be approximately $10,000 per year. Language should be included stipulating that the total annual budget tax payers are required to cover will not exceed $100,000 and not place an undue burden on any individual taxpayer.

The quasi municipal government entity should be required by law to acquire by means other than taxation capital reserves to fund the remaining substantial costs involved in dam ownership e.g. lawyer fees, engineering studies, state mandated repairs, extreme weather damages, major repairs, and replacement costs, which, while never mentioned in the testimony, have been estimated by those involved to add up to millions of dollars. The draft legislation as written forces shore front property owners to pay these enormous costs in full without consent.

Thank you once again for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Gaye Marie Rogers