

Richard Estabrook
Brunswick Maine
LD 430

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

I am writing to express my opposition to LD 430, An Act to Impose Moratoria on Hydropower Dam Removal and on Water Release from Nonhydropower Dams and to Make Other Changes to the Laws Regulating Such Dams.

My opposition is based upon my desire, within my lifetime (I am 73) to see the restoration of anadromous fish to Maine rivers. We as a society for over one hundred years treated our rivers as sewers. Due in no small part to Senator Muskie our rivers are coming back to life. Where once no one wanted to walk next to a Maine river because of the stench of industrial pollution there are now walking paths in our major cities. I want this trend of returning our rivers to their natural splendor continued. Wherever a dam has been removed, the river, and the wildlife that lives in and nearby, has returned. Eagles now congregate by the dozens in the miles of river that have been restored to free flow by the removal of a dam. The Kennebec River has perfect spawning grounds for salmon in the Sandy River in Franklin County. The fish cannot reach those grounds because of dams. The rivers of Maine belong to the people of Maine. Their use should not be controlled by foreign corporations who have duties to maximize profits of owners and dividends to shareholders.

I am also motivated to want the return of free-flowing rivers by the horrible injustice that was done to Maine's indigenous peoples by the damming of the rivers. We robbed them, not only of a food source, but also of a crucial part of their culture. That is an injustice that needs to be righted. I regard LD 430 as a step backwards. It is an imposition of bureaucratic hurdles in order to protect dam owners. For these reasons I hope you will reject LD 430.

Thank you.