



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
21 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0021

CARL J. WILSON
ACTING COMMISSIONER

April 07, 2025

Environment and Natural Resources Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: L.D. 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

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee,

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (Department) opposes L.D. 430. This bill would restrict the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from approving an application for a permit to remove a dam that is part of a hydropower project and from issuing an order to a dam owner to release water.

Sections 1 and 9 of the bill would place a moratorium on hydropower dam removals and water release orders anywhere in the state, which will directly impact active restoration projects managed or supported by the Department in 2025 and 2026 that include dam removals. These projects are supported by the communities in which they are located because they will significantly benefit them by restoring important commercial and recreational fisheries, removing safety hazards, and improving water quality. Enacting this bill will delay or prevent these projects, which are funded primarily with federal grants that will expire before the end of the moratorium. The benefits of these projects will not be realized if these projects are not completed.

The Department is aware of the concerns related to dam removals in some locations, including the three dams owned by AIM Development USA at Toddy Pond, Silver Lake and Alamoosook Lake. We understand that AIM Development USA has proposed to forfeit the three dams, which could result in the supervised dewatering of the three lakes. Our comments are in opposition to the broad (E.g., statewide) nature of the moratorium proposed in sections 1 and 9 of the bill, but the Department supports efforts of communities, such as Bucksport and Orland, to find solutions that work for those communities.

In addition, the Department is aware of four applications for surrender of hydropower licenses with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). We anticipate that some of those applications could be approved by FERC while the moratorium would be in effect, which could force the dam owners to delay surrender activities that would, in some cases, violate commitments or legal agreements for completing those activities.

In closing, the Department has devoted significant time and resources over years toward restoring sea run fish populations to secure sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries to provide economic benefits to communities across the State of Maine. We would be happy to work with the bill sponsor to better understand the work that he was hoping to make possible with this proposed change and help identify solutions that do not cause delay or otherwise impact projects statewide.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if DMR can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

Sean Ledwin

Sean Ledwin
Director, Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat