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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. 1210 An Act to Regarding Renewable Electricity Generation by Hydropower Projects
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**

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

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) opposes L.D. 1210. This bill amends the laws regulating the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permit approval process and water quality certification for hydropower projects by adding new criteria that DEP must consider. Rather than basing approval on existing criteria outlined in state and federal law determined to be reasonable to protect and preserve the environment and public health, criteria which includes assessing the effect on wildlife habitat and aquatic life, this bill requires DEP to consider the project regardless of the projects effects on wildlife and aquatic life. Such a modification will negatively impact important protections for fish and wildlife resources in Maine.

Protecting sea-run fish from the impacts of hydropower dams, including blockages to historic habitats and lethal turbines, is essential to maintaining and restoring these important resources. The State of Maine benefits from restored sea-run fish runs through increased fishing and recreational opportunities. For example, restored fish runs support over \$200M in economic activity related to recreational fishing for species like striped bass. Restored fish runs also support Maine's lucrative elver fishery, and provide municipalities with alewife harvest opportunities that support their towns and Maine's \$1B lobster fishery.

Protective fish and wildlife measures at dams also support important wildlife species such as loon nesting, eagles and ospreys, and indirectly provide food resources for marine species such as puffins, cod, and whales. These and other resources require protective measures and careful consideration during hydropower relicensing. This bill could limit those protections.

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

Sincerely

Sean Ledwin

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Director, Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat