



**APPALACHIAN  
MOUNTAIN CLUB**  
SINCE 1876

**Testimony of Eliza Townsend  
in 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***

**April 7, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit; our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and manage 130,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education. We pay property taxes on all of our land.

We oppose LD 430, which would institute a moratorium on dam removal statewide for nearly two years. We are aware of the concerns of residents and property owners in Bucksport, Orland, Penobscot, Surry and Blue Hill regarding the desire by AIM Development USA, to forfeit ownership of three dams in the area. However, we believe LD 62, *An Act to Support Municipal and County Actions on Dam Ownership*, takes a better approach to addressing that challenge.

LD 430's proposed moratorium has the potential to stall other dam removals from taking place across the state until January 2017. Dam removal has proven tremendously successful in Maine, and the rebirth of downtown Augusta is one example. Once nearly empty, today the downtown area is thriving, supporting several restaurants and other establishments. Key to that revitalization is the free-flowing Kennebec and the return of fish species as a result of the removal of the Edwards dam. I encourage you to spend time beside the river on a summer evening enjoying the leaps of 6-foot sturgeon and, in all likelihood, a Bald Eagle circling above.

On our property in Piscataquis County, AMC is engaged in watershed scale habitat restoration for both native Brook Trout and the endangered Atlantic salmon in the West and Middle Branches of the Pleasant River, a tributary to the Penobscot. With partners, we have restored 126 miles of spawning habitat, restored miles of river once dynamited and bulldozed to natural conditions, and seeded Atlantic salmon eggs since 2016. Today, this endangered species is returning to its historic headwaters at Gulf Hags after nearly 180 years. That would not have been possible but for the fish passage opened by the Penobscot River Restoration Project, which included dam removals.

We cannot know what circumstances may take place in the next two years that might lead to a dam being removed following the existing process. Therefore, we support the more tailored approach found in LD 62, and we ask you to vote LD 430 Ought Not to Pass.