

April 7, 2025

Honorable Margaret Rotundo, Chair
Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **Testimony In Support of LD 25 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects**

Dear Senator Rotundo, Senator Bernard, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

Houlton Water Company is a public utility company that serves the community of Houlton, Maine with electric, water, and sewer services. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 25 as it may greatly affect our ability to manage biosolids issues as we move forward.

Discussion. Demonstrating leadership on public health, Maine responded to PFAS contamination concerns in 2021, electing to ban beneficial reuse of biosolids. While we understand the need for such action, the ban of beneficial reuse has forced these materials to landfills that have significantly limited capacity and operational challenges associated with managing such wet waste. Recognizing these unintended consequences, Maine DEP funded an independent study in 2023 by Brown & Caldwell, which examines these challenges, and recommends investing in biosolids volume reduction and management projects such as improved dewatering, digestion and drying.

Following the recommendations of the Brown & Caldwell study, passing LD25 would be an opportunity to continue a leadership position by activating a funding mechanism for Maine's public utilities. This bill would provide grant funding to address the looming crisis in an industry that already has over \$1.7B of additional identified infrastructure needs. The current biosolids need is greater than what LD25 offers but is an essential step in the right direction.

If approved, LD 25 will assist clean water utility districts and municipal clean water facilities to fund infrastructure projects to manage biosolids, minimize impacts to Maine's landfills, and facilitate research and technology to define alternative approaches to biosolids volume reduction.

If LD 25 does not pass, Maine's extremely limited landfill space will fill up much faster and options for biosolids disposal will be extremely limited.

Sincerely,