



LD 1529 Public Hearing Testimony – April 17, 2025

My name is Larry Bastian. I am speaking on behalf of the Maine Chapter, Native Fish Coalition (NFC). NFC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation, preservation, and restoration of wild native fish. NFC was founded in Maine in 2017 and has since grown to 21 state chapters representing members, partners, volunteers and supporters.

Maine has the largest and most diverse intact populations of wild native salmonids in the contiguous United States. Maine has roughly 90% of the remaining lake and pond brook trout in the United States, and the last wild native Arctic charr in the United States outside of Alaska. Maine enacted the State Heritage Fish Law in 2007 to protect lakes and ponds with significant populations of wild native brook trout and Arctic charr. To date there are over 475 waters on the State Heritage list.

Native Fish Coalition supports the provisions within LD 1529 for Land Use Planning Commission rulemaking to protect undeveloped, high value lakes. There are at least 31 State Heritage Fish Waters currently classified as Management Class 7 by the Maine Wildlands Lake Assessment published by LURC in 1987. Significant examples include Cold Stream Pond, just outside of Cold Stream Forest public lands, and Wadleigh Pond in T8 R15, one of twelve remaining Arctic charr waters in Maine. All of these are lakes and ponds of statewide significance that are worthy of reclassification to Management Class 1 or Management Class 6 as proposed in LD 1529.

Maine has lost populations of wild native brook trout, Arctic charr, landlocked salmon, and lake whitefish. If we are to stop the losses as noted in IFW's 2021 Strategic Plan, Maine needs a comprehensive strategy to effectively manage our high value lakes and ponds and their watersheds. LD 1529 is a significant positive step towards that goal and we urge this committee to advance this bill to the Legislature with a favorable recommendation.

Thank You,

Larry Bastian
Chair Maine Chapter Native Fish Coalition