

Audrey Rabinowitz  
Denmark  
LD 1696

Greetings Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and ENR Committee Members,

My name is Audrey Rabinowitz, I live in Denmark, Maine and I am testifying in strong support of LD 1696 "Resolve, to Study Maine's Absolute Dominion and Beneficial Use Laws Relating to Water Rights".

I write having served for over 2 years on the Denmark, Maine Water Ordinance Review Committee (completed last November.) I believe it is essential that we review our Absolute Dominion Laws for many reasons, including:

1. Absolute dominion does not take into account impacts on neighboring users. Most states have rejected this doctrine. For Mainers, it is up to local towns to create their own ordinances to protect their water resources. They are often faced with extreme pressure from industries that benefit from the law.
2. So many Mainers rely on well water for their homes - and Absolute Dominion often puts that well water supply at risk.
3. Our water resources are essential to what makes Maine unique among our 50 states. Agriculture (including small farms), industries (including fishing), tourism, and personal enjoyment for our citizens are among the reasons to protect those water resources.
4. Climate change is already affecting our water resources - including aquifer recharge, lake and pond levels and temperatures, risks to wildlife. Absolute Dominion makes it harder to plan for and protect against these changes.
5. Water privatization is a growing industry in Maine with large scale extraction occurring and expanding around the state:
  - Most of the extracted water is shipped out of state.
  - It has been linked to lower water levels of surrounding ponds, lakes and wells - though the water industry lobbies against this and disputes the scientifically proven correlations.
  - The large scale extraction industry provides very little benefit to our state - few jobs, minimal funds.
  - The industry, which started as a Maine based business, has been sold over and over again, most recently last November to a global water concern. It is reasonable to assume they will look to expand. And our water will be sold to the highest bidder - possibly at our own loss.

The formation of this committee can only benefit our state. A review - even if Absolute Dominion remains in effect, will provide a sound understand of our state's water resources and how best to protect them.

Thank you.