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South Portland  
LD 1696

My name is Amanda Gavin, I live in South Portland, ME 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".

Since 2016, I have studied water quality in Maine. I got my master's degree at UMaine where I studied recovery from acid rain in lakes across the state. I then spent three years at an environmental consulting firm, partnering with local lake associations, municipalities, and cities across Maine to help address local issues related to water quality and water quantity. Now, I am back at UMaine researching how climate change impacts lakes in our high-elevation lakes as part of my PhD.

According to the World Economic Forum, water scarcity and insecurity are some of the largest global risks of the next decade—35% of the world already lacks access to clean drinking water and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the world's population lives under water-stressed conditions. According to the World Economic Forum, water scarcity and insecurity are some of the largest global risks of the next decade—35% of the world already lacks access to clean drinking water and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the world's population lives under water-stressed conditions. In the state of Maine, approximately 40 % of citizens rely on a privately owned groundwater well for all forms of water, not just drinking water (Maine Geological Survey, 2012). This dependency on aquifers indicates how important a natural source of water these aquifers are for Maine citizens to survive. It's clear that aquifers are critical for Maine citizens, small farmers, businesses, and tribal nations. However, outdated laws like the Absolute Dominion Rule permit billion-dollar corporations to extract our groundwater for profit. I urge this committee to put together a commission to study the current law and make recommendations to modernize our groundwater laws to increase protection. If we do not update our groundwater laws and protections, we will regret it. An adequate supply of clean water is the most important thing any community can have, and currently, the State of Maine is not doing enough to ensure citizens of Maine have enough clean drinking water for future generations.