

**Testimony in Support of  
LD 1382 – An Act Regarding Dam Repair**

*D. Scott Miller, Blue Hill Select Board Member  
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Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

My name is Scott Miller, and I am a member of the Blue Hill Select Board. Blue Hill is one of four towns now evaluating the prospect of assuming ownership of a “high hazard” dam to protect our residents from the proposed abandonment of the dam by the current, commercial owner. I am testifying in favor of LD 1382.

Part of what makes Maine a special place are the ~6,000 lakes and ponds<sup>1</sup> throughout the state. And many of these water bodies, including almost all of the best known and widely used ones, exist only because of dams constructed in the early 1900s or even the 1800s.

Many of these dams are now in the vicinity of their 100th birthdays and, while essential repair and maintenance work has occurred, we may be approaching an era where, for continued safety’s sake, a more fundamental reconstruction of the dams will be necessary. Depending on the specific circumstances of an individual dam, this reconstruction—or even major repair work—can cost several million dollars. The largest dams are often hydroelectric power dams that are owned by businesses that have their own revenue stream to help pay for reconstruction. But many of the others do not.

The Committee and MEMA well understand the importance of timely maintenance and repair of the dams in our state—especially the ones designated as “high hazard” dams—for public safety. A dam breach could cause catastrophic flooding of downstream properties far removed from the dam itself. So those downstream property owners rely on the dam owners to keep each dam in proper repair.

LD 1382 provides a mechanism to help finance the investment required to keep these dams safe—especially for dams that are not associated with commercial enterprises. The loan funds available through this legislation will help dam owners keep their dams in good repair and, thereby, enhance the safety and security of all Mainers in the vicinity of the dam.

I encourage the Committee to support this legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> [Lakes Page - lake or pond, Bureau of Land and Water Quality, Maine DEP](#)