



City of Auburn, Maine

Public Services

Eric Cousens, Executive Director

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

TESTIMONEY OF THE CITY OF AUBURN IN FAVOR OF LD 2187 WITH POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Date: February 18, 2026

Overview

The City of Auburn submits comments in favor of L.D. 2187 "An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State" (SP0892). The City supports the amended classification as proposed with or without an amendment to recognize that the portion of the river from the Gulf Island Dam to the Worumbo Dam should be conditionally upgraded to class B if and when amendments proposed in LD 2187 become Law. On behalf of the Auburn City Council, I write to reaffirm our longstanding support for the reclassification of the Androscoggin River from Class C to Class B for the segment extending from Great Falls to Merrymeeting Bay.

The City of Auburn has consistently recognized the Androscoggin River as a critical environmental, recreational, and economic resource. Over the past several decades, the river has shown sustained improvement in water quality, supported by robust data and the success of modern wastewater treatment systems. These improvements warrant a formal reclassification to Class B, which would more accurately reflect the river's current condition and reinforce our commitment to environmental stewardship and economic revitalization.

Classification System

There is significant similarity between Class A and Class B standards. However, there is considerable difference between the C Classification and the B Classification for rivers and streams.

Although still classified as C, the aesthetic quality of the Androscoggin River when it first met the Classification several decades ago and the aesthetic quality today are worlds apart. Except for the stratified area in the Deep Hole in Gulf Island Pond, Dissolved Oxygen is above 7.0 mg/l the vast majority of the time and seldom drops below 6.3 mg/l. The appearance of the water, notably color, foam and odor have improved substantially. A review of biological monitoring data conducted over the past 5 years or so indicates that the river meets the B and in a few cases Class A biological criteria.

The city supports the proposed amendments of the class B standard in LD 2187 to allow some deviation from the 7 mg/l for short periods of time as proposed by the Maine DEP and Maine BEP and now under consideration by the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (ENRC).

Classification of the Androscoggin River

The city encourages the ENRC to also propose that LD 2187 be amended to recognize that the Androscoggin River from the Gulf Island Dam to the Worumbo Dam meets the new Class B standards, provided that LD 2187 is enacted, without waiting for three more years for the next triennial review process. Proposed language to achieve that is provided below.

§467. Classification of major river basins

All surface waters lying within the boundaries of the State that are in river basins having a drainage area greater than 100 square miles that are not classified as lakes or ponds are classified in this section. [PL 1989, c. 764, §2 (AMD).]

1. Androscoggin River Basin.

A. Androscoggin River, main stem, including all impoundments.

(1) From the Maine-New Hampshire boundary to its confluence with the Ellis River - Class B.

(2) From its confluence with the Ellis River to ~~Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls~~ Gulf Island Dam in Auburn - Class C.

(3) From ~~Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls~~ Gulf Island Dam in Auburn to a line formed by the extension of the Bath-Brunswick boundary across Merrymeeting Bay in a northwesterly direction - Class B.

Eric J. Cousens

Director of Public Services