

LD 2187, An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

My name is Richard Estabrook. I am a resident of Brunswick. I am submitting this testimony urging you to vote in favor of LD 2187 with the Androscoggin upgrade amendment. First, I want to thank Senator Tepler for sponsoring this legislation. Also I want to thank Brunswick's Representative Ankles for several times taking the time to listen to my thoughts and respond to me about my long-term vision for Maine's rivers. Your willingness to listen and respond is much appreciated, Dan.

I am not a fisherman. However, in the past several years I have become an advocate for the restoration of Maine's rivers to historic levels of cleanliness and fish access. I am so proud to have been a resident of Maine for forty-seven years and to have had the privilege of watching Maine's rivers slowly being transformed from industrial sewers into the beautiful wonders they can be. Over fifty years ago I recall first seeing the Androscoggin River as it passed near Dixfield. It was sullied with a multitude of foamy white bubbles that clearly were not natural. As a state and as a people we have come so far. I was thrilled when the deal was reached on the Kennebec with the Nature Conservancy to purchase the four remaining dams. It gives me great pleasure to see the return of fish and wildlife to miles of river when the Edwards Dam was removed. These magnificent riverine ecosystems can restore themselves.

I believe that the passage of LD 2187 will help complete our journey toward full river restoration. Nearer to home, I have recently seen the tremendous interest in the lower parts of the Androscoggin. People are coming to understand the gift we have been given in this stretch of the river. I am asking you to support the amendment which will include a classification upgrade to Class B from the Worumbo dam in Lisbon to the Gulf Island Pond dam in Auburn.

Environmentally and spiritually cleaning and maintaining our rivers in a natural state is the right thing to do. We know that. I happen also to believe that the economic impact of clean rivers is immense. People are drawn to clean bodies of water. Our local economies will benefit as riverfront property values rise. Businesses will no longer shun the river. They will use the purity of the river in their advertising. People become proud of what we have been able to achieve for our land and water. The overall quality of life rises. The economy benefits. For these reasons I ask that you pass LD 2187 as amended.

Richard Estabrook

