

Sandra Scholar, Esq.
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LD 2187

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Sandra Scholar and I write in support of LD 2187 with the caveat that a reclassification upgrade amendment of the upper lower Androscoggin River be included.

When the actual quality of the water exceeds that of its current classification, this leaves room to pollute while still meeting the lower classification. This is the situation on the upper lower Androscoggin River from Worumbo dam in Lisbon Falls to Gulf Island Pond dam in Auburn. Because intensive sampling last summer by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay at ten sites in this section of river showed easy Class B compliance 100% of the time, I'm asking you to please support amendment language to lock in the improved water quality, as required by law. 38 M.R.S.A. § 464 (F) (4) ("When the actual quality of any classified water exceeds the minimum standards of the next highest classification, that higher water quality must be maintained and protected.") <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec464.html>

Clean rivers improve and enhance local economies. A clean, healthy river attracts people and new businesses to riverfront areas, contributing to a healthy economy. http://cybrary.fomb.org/pages/20200331%20AUP%20Exhibit%2008%20Economic_Benefit_Articles.pdf (studies on economic benefits of clean waters)

A clean, healthy river provides people with recreational opportunities, improving and strengthening surrounding communities and the local quality of life. http://cybrary.fomb.org/pages/20200331%20AUP%20Exhibit%2006%20Andro_Comp_Plan_Excerpts.pdf (Comprehensive Plan excerpts from Androscoggin communities on importance of clean water)

Cleaner rivers have well-documented ecological benefits. Besides aquatic species, 70-80% percent of terrestrial wildlife species inhabit or utilize river corridors and benefit from high water quality.

https://cybrary.fomb.org/pages/McNew%20et%20al%20eds.%202023%20Rangeland%20Wildlife%20Ecology%20and%20Conservation-Water%20is%20Life-Chapter%2007_compressed.pdf (See Chapter 7: 70-80% percent of terrestrial wildlife species inhabit or utilize river corridors and benefit from high water quality)

Clean rivers are the life blood of Maine and making water quality upgrades whenever possible to reflect and lock in actual improved conditions will benefit all of us by contributing to a healthy environment for people and wildlife.

Please support of LD 2187 with the caveat that a reclassification upgrade amendment of the upper lower Androscoggin River be included.

Respectfully submitted,