



February 23, 2026

RE: Support for LD 2187 Amendment – Androscoggin River Reclassification

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Downeast Salmon Federation (DSF), I am writing to express our support for LD 2187, An Act To Update Certain Water Quality Standards and To Reclassify Certain Waters of the State, with the important amendment to upgrade the Androscoggin River segment from the Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls to the Gulf Island Pond Dam in Auburn to Class B.

In 2020, DSF submitted a letter supporting the reclassification of the Androscoggin River in keeping with Maine's anti-degradation policy and the requirements of 38 M.R.S.A. § 464(4)(F)(4), which states that when the actual quality of any classified water exceeds the minimum standards of the next highest classification, that higher quality must be maintained and protected. That principle remains directly applicable today.

The available field data demonstrate that this segment of the Androscoggin meets Class B standards for dissolved oxygen and E. coli, even during challenging hydrologic conditions. Aquatic life sampling has also shown compliance with Class B criteria. Under Maine statute, when waters attain the standards of a higher classification, the Legislature is required to reclassify them accordingly.

Upgrading this section of the river to Class B would lock in decades of measurable water quality improvements and prevent backsliding. It would ensure that the balance between industrial use and environmental protection is maintained for future generations, consistent with the Clean Water Act's anti-degradation provisions. Clean, high-quality rivers strengthen local economies, support aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, increase property values, and enhance quality of life for surrounding communities.

The Androscoggin River was once known for its remarkable runs of Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish. While Atlantic salmon are no longer present in the watershed, protecting and improving water quality remains essential to any long-term restoration vision. Reclassification would honor the significant public and private investments that have brought the river to its current condition and ensure those gains are preserved.

For these reasons, DSF respectfully urges you to support LD 2187 with an amendment to upgrade the Androscoggin River from the Worumbo Dam to the Gulf Island Pond Dam to Class B.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in protecting Maine's waters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dwayne Shaw'.

Dwayne Shaw
Executive Director