

Kristi Hatrick  
Brunswick  
LD 2187

February 20, 2026

Senator Denise Tepler, Chair  
Representative Victoria Doudera, Chair  
100 State House Station  
17 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Support for LD 2187, An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State, with the caveat that a reclassification upgrade amendment of the lower Androscoggin River be included

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

The Executive Committee of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (BTLT), authorized to act on behalf of the Board of Directors of BTLT per BTLT's Advocacy Policy, is pleased to advise you of its support for LD 2187, with the caveat that a reclassification upgrade amendment of the lower Androscoggin River be included. Clean rivers are the lifeblood of Maine. Water quality upgrades that reflect and lock in actual improved conditions benefit all of us, from aquatic species to we humans. Indeed, a healthy environment and economy improve the overall quality of life in Maine.

When the actual quality of the water exceeds that of its classification, this leaves room to pollute while still meeting the lower existing classification. This is the situation on the portion of the Androscoggin River from Worumbo dam in Lisbon Falls to Gulf Island Pond (GIP) dam in Auburn. Sampling of this portion of the river by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay at ten sites last summer demonstrated Class B compliance 100% of the time. Please support amendment language that locks in this improved water quality.

The field data collected during a record drought year by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay shows the section of the Androscoggin below GIP in attainment of Class B Dissolved Oxygen and E.Coli standards, thus triggering this statutory mandate. The last sampling for aquatic life standards (2021) also demonstrated compliance with Class B.

Because this portion of the river already meets Class B standards, BTLT's Executive Committee believes this reclassification is appropriate and desirable to help ensure that the Androscoggin River's water quality will continue to improve into the future. Along with aquatic species, upwards of 80% of our terrestrial wildlife species inhabit river corridors and all benefit as we do. This includes the endangered Atlantic salmon that finds habitat in this river.

BTLT has conserved 177 acres and nearly 5 miles of shoreline along and within the Androscoggin River. BTLT's Strategic Conservation Plan, which outlines our priorities and goals for protecting land and water in our region, recognizes the significant ecological and recreational value of the Androscoggin River, which flows into the Merrymeeting Bay. Our Plan prioritizes projects within this watershed for their significant conservation values and their role in buffering anticipated marsh migration and higher sea levels. It is also important to BTLT that the water quality of the river, which directly impacts and shapes wildlife habitat and recreational resources, remains healthy and improves into the future. We have committed to steward and care for the conservation values of the lands that we own outright and hold conservation easements on and therefore are particularly vested in maintaining and improving the health of the Androscoggin River.

Therefore, on behalf of the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust Board of Directors, I urge you to support LD 2187, with the caveat that a reclassification upgrade

amendment of the lower Androscoggin River be included.

Please contact me with any questions. Your consideration of this request is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kristi Hatrick

Executive Director