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February 24, 2026

Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural
Resources
Cross Building, Room 216
Augusta, Me 04333



Re: Testimony in support of LD 2187 *An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State*

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, Distinguished Members of the
Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources,

The Sunrise County Economic Council respectfully presents this testimony in favor of LD 2187 *An Act to Update Certain Water Quality Standards and to Reclassify Certain Waters of the State*. In particular, the Council supports the recommendation of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Board of Environmental Protection to maintain the SB Water Quality Standard for Chandler Bay in Jonesport.

The Sunrise County Economic Council is a nonprofit corporation that works to create jobs and prosperity in Washington County; we are also the economic development arm of Washington County Government. Washington County's economy is built on natural resource industries such as lobster, pulp and tissue, wild blueberries, and salmon. Changing the Chandler Bay water quality standard from SB to SA is inconsistent with the working landscape of blueberry barrens and woodlots that make up most of Chandler Bay's watershed. It would also complicate the redevelopment of the biomass to energy facility in Jonesboro and threaten the viability of the proposed Kingfish land based aquaculture facility in Jonesport.

Kingfish Maine is planning to invest over one hundred million dollars and create between 70 and 100 jobs in Washington County. The Sunrise County Economic Council strongly supports this project because it meets our guiding principles of economic impact, technical feasibility, community impact, and stakeholder involvement. Kingfish has worked its way through Maine's rigorous permitting process over the past five years. It has met the town and state standards and successfully defended its permits all the way to the Maine Supreme Court while maintaining strong support from the voters of Jonesport¹.

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Whether by intention or not, the Eastern Maine Conservation Initiative's proposal to change the water quality standards in Chandler Bay from SB to SA has introduced legal uncertainty for the Kingfish project. This has delayed construction and increased costs. If this proposed change is incorporated into LD 2187, it could effectively kill the Kingfish project and have a chilling effect on any proposed investment in Washington County, and Maine more generally, that requires a site development or wastewater discharge permit. A stable and predictable permitting process is essential to the continued success of our natural resource industries.

We strongly support LD 2187 as drafted because it does not change the water quality standards in Chandler Bay. This supports our traditional natural resource industries and allows the innovative Kingfish project to proceed. This is essential to the livelihoods of many Washington County families.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter and your commitment to our state's future.

Sincerely,



Denise L. Cilley, MBA
Associate Director
Sunrise County Economic Council

cc: Senator Marianne Moore
Representative Arthur Mingo
Representative Tiffany Strout
Representative William Tuell

¹ The Kingfish Maine project received approval at the March 2, 2020 Jonesport Annual Town Meeting and has continued to receive local voter affirmation during subsequent municipal proceedings. State permits were upheld following review by the Maine Board of Environmental Protection and the Maine Supreme Judicial Court in *Roque Island Gardner Homestead Corp. v. Dep't of Envtl. Prot.*, 2022 ME 18.