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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, I am Representative Daniel Sayre of Kennebunk, and I am pleased to present for your consideration LD 1441, “An Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources.”

This bill embodies the recommendations of the Commission to Study the Role of Water as a Resource in the State of Maine as published in APPENDIX D of the commission’s final report in December, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

This bill implements the specific recommendations of the Commission regarding the coordination of data collection and data reporting related to water resources in the state. Improving the quality and availability of information about this essential resource will make it easier to make sound and effective policy decisions.

The bill does several things. First, it amends the duties of the Water Resources Planning Committee within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to include developing measures for the consolidation of water resources data. This will centralize information within a single state agency, ensure public access to that information, identify opportunities to enhance the collection of state water resources information, and enhance the State's monitoring and data collection around water use and water resources.

The bill also includes specific measures for the Maine Agricultural Water Management Board to develop recommendations to enhance drought preparedness and drought resilience by agricultural producers.

Finally, it requires both entities -- the Water Resources Planning Committee and the Maine Agricultural Water Management Board -- to begin submitting annual reports to the relevant joint standing committees of the Legislature, so that all bodies charged with oversight of the state’s water resources have access to current, accurate data and receive timely recommendations, including suggested legislation.

In short, this bill aims to make the collection and reporting of water resource information more efficient, so that our policymaking can be better informed.

I thank you for your consideration of LD 1441, and I will be happy to address any questions you might have.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://legislature.maine.gov/role-of-water-as-a-resource-in-the-state>