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LD 1441 - "An Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources"

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, thank you for the opportunity to introduce this legislation. My name is Representative Art Bell and I have the privilege of serving House District #103, the Town of Yarmouth.

I am pleased to sponsor LD 1441 - "**An Act to Enhance State Oversight of Water Use and Water Resources**" as a way for all of us – on this committee, in the Legislature as a whole, and all stakeholders across the state – to make better, more informed policy and decisions.

This bill was first conceived this past fall after the completion of the extensive work of the Commission "To Study the Role of Water as a Resource in the State of Maine".

I hope that you will agree that the exhaustive work of last year's Commission revealed that critically important on-going and future decisions regarding water use and water resources deserve better, more current data than we're currently working with. In addition, this information should come out annually, and include findings and recommendations, with suggested legislation. I know I would not feel comfortable designing my family's budget, for example, w/o comprehensive and up-to-date data.

There will be others to testify here today, who will have a tremendous understanding of the water management landscape, and who will still see the need to support this bill. Even with their decades of experience in this industry, they know that we can always improve – and that improvement starts with understanding the data and trends in the industry.

I thank you for your consideration of LD 1441, and I welcome questions you might have.