

Good Afternoon,

I am Catherine Spencer DiPietro, P.E., an engineer of 40 years experience with water systems in Maine as well as other states and other countries. I am here to testify in Support of LD 1111 - An Act Concerning Contracts and Agreement for Large-scale Water Extraction. We in Maine are gifted with water - both surface waters and groundwaters. Nearly 550,000 Mainers use groundwater from private wells for drinking and daily use. Another 250,000 of our citizens obtain groundwater from non-community supplies such as schools, manufacturing facilities or campgrounds. A majority of the 1900 public water supplies in this state use groundwater sources.

We talk about surface water and groundwater as separate entities, but they are inextricably bound together in the hydrologic cycle and they deserve equal protections. However, under current laws, surface waters are better protected from both pollution and overuse (over extraction) than groundwaters are. A potential benefit of ID 1111 would allow local governments to proceed with caution regarding groundwater extraction within their jurisdictions. Conversely, without the protection of this legislation, a village or town could be bound to allow water extraction even if it is no longer in the best interest of the residents of that town. The gift of adequate water is not assured and should not be taken for granted - the drought of last summer revealed the vulnerability of individuals and communities to lack of water. LD 1111 is a step toward better stewardship of the gift of groundwater that all Maine citizens share and I urge you to support passage of this law in the House and the Senate.