

Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

April 24, 2023

RE: LD 1049, *An Act to Protect Maine's Inland Fisheries from Invasive Fish*

Dear Chair LaFountain, Chair Landry, and Members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee:

My name is Francesca Gundrum and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine’s wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to LD 1049, *An Act to Protect Maine's Inland Fisheries from Invasive Fish*.

Maine currently has the last remaining wild population of Atlantic Salmon in the U.S. Because of the dramatic decline in this iconic species, it is currently listed as ‘Endangered’ under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Efforts are underway to reverse this negative trend. Maine Audubon opposes this bill because we believe it could interfere with those efforts.

Addressing the threats that invasive species have on Atlantic Salmon, the aquatic environment, other wildlife species, and more is of great importance to Maine Audubon. While we appreciate concerns that this bill raises regarding the movement invasive fish we have two primary concerns:

- The proposed actions – the barring of any future fishways at the Medway Dam in Medway and the Brown Mills Dam in Dover-Foxcroft – are atypical and may circumvent existing and future collaboration amongst NGOs, state and federal agencies, the Penobscot Nation, and others regarding the planning and management of aquatic invasive species.
- The proposed bill has implications that also significantly impact fish passage and restoration of native migratory fish species, such as ESA listed Atlantic Salmon, including setting a precedent that could have statewide implications.



Collaborative, statewide efforts to evaluate and address invasive fish species are well underway. It is important that we let our state agencies and key stakeholders continue their work on both connectivity and fish passage restoration and invasive species management without interference. We urge the Committee to oppose this bill. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francesca Gundrum".

Francesca "Ches" Gundrum
Policy Advocate