

May 1, 2023

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for being on this important committee representing The State of Maine. Your hard work is appreciated.

I am a resident of Auburn, Maine and I am here to support LD 1473. We, in the Lewiston-Auburn cities are at risk of losing our clean, affordable drinking water. LD 1473 will protect our public drinking water supply in keeping it clean and affordable.

A couple of questions come to mind when thinking about affordable clean drinking water -

Is access to clean and affordable drinking water a basic human right?

Should we then be responsible for protecting our natural sources that supply public drinking water?

In Auburn, we have situations where watershed areas have been rearranged. What? How does that happen?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a particular body of water, such as a stream, river, pond or lake. A watershed is not determined by political boundaries, but instead is shaped by nature's hills and valleys.

It is surprising, or maybe not, that we have elected city officials who are choosing where a watershed exists despite scientific geologic and hydrologic data proving otherwise. Shouldn't watershed areas be protected? Of course, one might think.

Why is the watershed of Lake Auburn a contentious issue, one might wonder. The answer is one of convolution.

Lewiston and Auburn exist on approximately 100 square miles. Our public drinking water supply comes from Lake Auburn. The twin cities have diligently maintained the levels of clean public drinking water.

The convolution aspect has gradually grown when the watershed boundaries were rearranged, and LD 2003 comes along to promote housing affordability opportunities. What does one bill have to do with the other. A small number of elected city government officials in Auburn have determined that affordable housing needs to happen in the watershed.

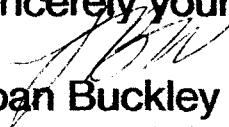
The crux of the matter is a small handful of people who will financially benefit from developing the watershed area of Lake Auburn have purposely convoluted is a way to compromise our clean and affordable drinking water because they just don't care.

Building on the watershed, of all places, will compromise our affordable and clean drinking water. Developing this area will inevitably lead to the need to build a 45 million dollar water filtration system on the back of citizens in Lewiston and Auburn.

Without the support of LD 1473 we will no longer have affordable drinking water.

Again, thank you for your hard work in this legislative session.

Sincerely yours,


**Joan Buckley Wenzel
Auburn, Maine
joanwenzel5@gmail.com**