

Boothbay Region

Jonathan Ziegra,
General Manager

Water District

PO Box 520, Boothbay, ME 04537 207-633-4723 Fax 207-633-7921

25 January 2024

Honorable Mark Lawrence, Senate Chair
Honorable Stanley Zeigler House Chair
Joint Legislative Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: *Testimony in Support of LD 2104, An Act to Amend the Wiscasset Water District Charter*

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

My name is Jonathan Ziegra, and I am the General Manager for the Boothbay Region Water District, and a founding member of the 5-Rivers Regional Water Council, a chartered entity comprised of seven water districts in the mid-coast area, stretching along the coast from Topsham to Nobleboro and as far inland as Richmond. The 5 Rivers Regional Water Council was formed to study, and act upon the long-term sustainability of the region's finite water resources, as well as the proper treatment, and distribution of potable water for use by the region's 144,000 inhabitants. In a position of leadership for both entities I stand in favor of the passage of LD 2104, an act that is critical for the long-term sustainability of not only the town of Edgecomb, but the towns of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport, Damariscotta, Newcastle, Bristol and Nobleboro.

This act will bring the town of Edgecomb into the Wiscasset Water District (WWD) service territory, where currently no public water supplier exists or is able to operate. Based on my 32 years of experience in the public water industry in Maine, from objective first-hand observation, I can assure the committee, the WWD is a an excellent, politically stable water district, superbly managed, possessing adequate capacity to serve the residents of Edgecomb to the highest standard.

Currently, the town of Edgecomb operates an excellent and well-respected fire department. However, within the boundaries of Edgecomb, very little public fire protection, in the form of well cared for, high producing fire hydrants exist. By voting LD 2104 "Ought to Pass", this will open the door for the vast expansion of public fire protection for Edgecomb to the real benefit of its citizens.

Likewise, an "Ought to Pass" determination by this committee will set the stage for a consistent source of fresh and healthful potable water for not only the current residents of Edgecomb, but those yet to arrive in this rapidly growing region.

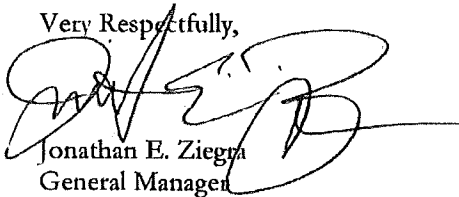
As clear, and as great the benefits are for the residents in Edgecomb, the passage of LD 2104 will have its most profound, positive impact for the current residents served by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, based in Damariscotta and those of the Boothbay Region Water District. As of now, these rapidly expanding centers of tourism are both served by water districts which have no redundant sources of supply. From a drinking water and fire protection perspective, both these districts sit alone, like islands, in arguably the center

of the tourist trade in Maine. Put simply, both districts need to interconnect to the 5-Rivers water distribution grid to safeguard and augment water service and fire protection well into the future.

With the passage of LD 2104, based on our partnership with Lincoln County in planning for the water needs for the region, a blueprint for access to sustainable water for all residents of Lincoln County can begin to be established. The first goal of this effort is the development of water infrastructure north along the Route 1 corridor within the town of Edgecomb, from Wiscasset to Newcastle and south, along the Route 27 corridor in Edgecomb from Wiscasset to Boothbay. Ultimately this will provide a stable and dependable water supply to not only the Boothbay Region, but the Damariscotta Region for not just decades to come, but centuries.

I again thank the committee for allowing me the time to discuss these complex and extremely important planning issues, of which the passage LD 2104 will go a long way in solving. I respectfully urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2104.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan E. Ziegler', written over a horizontal line.

Jonathan E. Ziegler
General Manager