



Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

March 3, 2025

RE: LD 646, Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution

Dear Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine 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 support of LD 646, *Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Study Unregulated Storm Water Pollution*.

Studying unregulated storm water pollution is critical to advance better stormwater management and the protection of Maine people, wildlife, and the environment. A rising threat with increasing high intensity storms and sea-level rise, stormwater pollution can discharge sediments, bacteria, nutrients, pesticides, and toxic pollutants into our environment. This pollution threatens public health and our economy. It has caused sudden closures of clam flats and beaches, made fish toxic to consume, and fueled algal blooms that smother aquatic life. Some pollutants that have been found in stormwater runoff, such as PFAS, can bioaccumulate in the food chain, leading to downstream health impacts far beyond the initial species affected.

We all depend on clean water and must do all in our power to protect it for Maine people, wildlife, and the environment. Compared to other states, Maine has relatively clean water, and as a result, Maine is the last stronghold in the eastern U.S. for wild Brook Trout and has the only remaining populations of landlocked Arctic Charr and sea-run Atlantic Salmon.. It also harbors the largest population of Common Loons in the eastern U.S. On top of that, 85% of Maine vertebrate species either live in aquatic habitats or use aquatic habitats or habitats adjacent to ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and the coast throughout the course of a year to find food, breed, and travel. Clean water is essential for fish, loons, and all wildlife.

LD 646 would convene a study commission to quickly identify steps to strengthen Maine's stormwater regulations and to support the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in their prioritization

of revising rules to better regulate stormwater and mitigate pollution consistent with *Maine Won't Wait*, the state's climate action plan. **We strongly encourage the Committee to support this bill.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate