



**APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAIN CLUB**
SINCE 1876

Testimony of Eliza Townsend

In support of LD 750

***Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 27: Standards for Timber Harvesting and
Timber Harvesting Related Activities Within Unorganized and Deorganized Areas of the State***

March 13, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the ACF Committee, I am Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit. Our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and manage 130,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education. We pay property taxes on all of our land.

AMC welcomes a single set of standards for timber harvesting and related activities statewide. We harvest approximately 9,000 cords of wood per year feeding 12 mills by contracting with local loggers. While AMC's land spans both organized municipalities and Unorganized Territories, the bulk of it lies in the UT, meaning the new standards will apply directly to our timber harvesting practices.

While we anticipate some change in our documentation, there will be no impact on our management of riparian areas, which already exceeds statewide standards.

AMC's land holdings include a substantial portion of the Pleasant River watershed, which contains critical habitat for native, wild Brook trout and the endangered Atlantic salmon, both of which rely on clear, cold water. Responsibility for a resource once described by a state fisheries biologist as "as close to pristine as possible...an ecological treasure trove" led us to make watershed-scale habitat restoration a central component of our land management.

Working with a range of partners, we have opened 126 miles of spawning habitat by replacing barriers to fish passage and restoring woody debris to create natural conditions in a river once widened and smoothed to carry logs. With the flow to the ocean opened by the Penobscot River Restoration Project, biologists began planting Atlantic salmon eggs in 2016, and since then adults have returned to their native headwaters for the first time in 180 years.

Of course, Atlantic salmon are not the only reason to protect clean waters and the adjacent shoreland area. Riparian zones maintain water quality by filtering sediment and excess nutrients, stabilize stream banks and reduce the velocity of flood waters, and support a diversity of plants and wildlife. As Maine faces the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, the value of shoreland areas becomes increasingly evident.



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The time has come to adopt one statewide set of regulations governing timber harvesting in the shoreland zone, as envisioned by lawmakers nearly twenty years ago. The application of Chapter 21 in the Unorganized and Deorganized Territories will mean that landowners, foresters, loggers, and regulators will share a clear and consistent understanding of the standards. In our case, it will mean that one set of standards applies across our ownership.

We urge you to vote LD 750 Ought to Pass.