

March 12, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and Members of the Committee,

My Name is Gerry Provencher and I am a farmer in New Sharon and I am here to testify in support of LD 748, a request for a geomorphic study of the Sandy River Watershed. I started the Sandy River Watershed Association (formerly known as ARC), because I saw the need to address the impact bank erosion was having on what I feel is critical infrastructure. The name was changed to Sandy River Watershed Association to better reflect the partnership that has developed with all that are affected by the Sandy River.

I own 47 acres of Intervale (river bottom) land on the Sandy River in New Sharon. Climate Change has and will continue to change how we farm. 2023 brought several heavy moisture events to the entire North East. Farmers could not get equipment on heavy clay fields. There was a hay shortage in Greater New England. The only bright spot was farmers were able to get on the intervale fields, due to the sandy soils. Intervale land, especially along the Sandy River, to quote Tony Jenkins, USDA Soil Scientist, "Is some of the best farm land in the State." Climate change predictions for the State of Maine say Maine will experience more heavy moisture events, this makes these interval fields critical for farmers and critical for State Agriculture.

This Study is the first part in the plan on how we address what is already here and is already happening. This Study will give us a better understanding on how we can protect critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water district wells and irreplaceable interval fields. With this study we can look at and better understand the balance that is needed between people and the environment.

Sincerely,

Gerry Provencher