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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM  
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF  
  
LAURA PAYE, HYDROPOWER COORDINATOR  
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
  
SPEAKING NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 531  
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE TODDY POND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT AND THE ALAMOOSOOK LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT

SPONSORED BY REP. MILLIKEN

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DATE OF HEARING:

MARCH 31, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee, I am Laura Paye, the Hydropower Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Resources in the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, speaking neither for nor against L.D. 531.

Title 38, Sections 901-908 outlines a process for an owner of a non-hydropower dam to petition the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for release from ownership or water level maintenance. The Department currently has before it the first instance of petitions that have been accepted for processing under Title 38, Sections 901-908, which include petitions for release from ownership of the Silver Lake, Toddy Pond, and Alamoosook Lake Dams.

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The dam owner, Bucksport Mill LLC, is currently in the consultation process outlined in Title 38, Section 902. During this process, the dam owner must consult with the entities included in Section 902(3). The dam owner must provide a report on the results of the consultation process to the Department on or before October 13, 2025.

If a new owner is not found during the consultation process, the Department must notify the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, and the Maine Emergency Management Agency that they must each, sequentially, evaluate the public value of the dam. If any one of these agencies determines that the best interest of the public requires it to assume ownership of the dam, it must do so. If none of the identified state agencies assume ownership of the dam, the Department must, after public notice, issue an order requiring the dam owner to release the water from the dam in a manner that minimizes the impact of the release, including requirements for mitigation where appropriate.

The Department is aware that many citizens are concerned about the potential for the release of water from the impoundments if a new owner is not identified in the consultation process, or if one of the three state agencies listed in the statutes does not assume ownership of the dams. The entities proposed in L.D. 531 could assume ownership of the Alamoosook Lake and Toddy Pond Dams within the process of Title 38, Sections 901-908.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee, both now and at the work session.