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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 IN SUPPORT OF**

**L.D. 62  
AN ACT TO SUPPORT MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY ACTIONS ON DAM OWNERSHIP  
PRESENTED 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 in support of L.D. 62. I would like to thank Representative Milliken for sponsoring this Department bill.

This bill proposes to amend two sections of Maine's Release from Dam Ownership and Water Level Maintenance laws, located in Title 38 Sections 901-908. These statutes outline 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.

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During processing of these petitions, the Department has requested information from the petitioner to ensure the process for release from dam ownership and water level maintenance incorporates a thorough review that provides municipalities, the public, and interested parties with as much information as possible.

L.D. 62 proposes two revisions to Title 38, Section 901(1). The first revision is to clarify that the Department requires descriptions of the condition of the dam and its recent operation to process the petitions. The second revision clarifies that the Department may require the petitioner to submit information brought to the Department's attention by the parties to consultation under Section 902 including municipalities, lake associations, state agencies, tribes, or interested members of the public. The proposed revisions to Section 901 reflect information that the Department found necessary for parties interested in ownership of the dams to have, primarily those named as parties to consultation in Title 38, Section 902(3), but also interested members of the public.

L.D. 62 also proposes a longer timeline for municipal and county legislative bodies to hold public meetings to act on the issue of dam ownership. County commissioners and municipal officers currently only have 60 days according to Section 908 to hold public meetings and act on the issue of dam ownership; L.D. 62 extends that timeline to 180 days. This longer timeline would give municipalities and counties the time necessary to review all materials provided by the petitioner and act on the issue of dam ownership.

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.