



Russell Black
Senator, District 5

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**LD 1346, “An Act Regarding the Supply of Water to the Town of New Sharon”
Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology
April 16, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology:

My name is Russell Black, and I represent Senate District 5. I’m here to present LD 1346, “An Act Regarding the Supply of Water to the Town of New Sharon.”

This bill is a response to an ongoing challenge in the Town. For a while now, the New Sharon Water District has struggled to maintain a full and functioning board of trustees. That lack of stability has made it difficult to manage the district and provide the level of service that residents deserve.

LD 1346 proposes to dissolve the water district and transfer its assets, debts, and responsibilities to the Town of New Sharon; but I want to be very clear: this is not a loss of local control—it is a reinforcement of it. The Town already has the administrative capacity to oversee water services and is prepared to step in to ensure consistent, accountable management moving forward.

This decision doesn’t rest with the Legislature alone. The bill requires a local referendum, giving the voters of New Sharon the final say. This solution was developed by the people most directly involved: the current district trustees and the members of the New Sharon Select Board. They agree this transition is the best path forward, and they’re asking for our help to make it possible.

This bill provides a thoughtful and locally-driven response to a structural issue, and it ensures that water service in New Sharon remains reliable and responsive to the needs of the community.

You will hear more from members of the rural water authority and residents of New Sharon with additional information regarding this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.