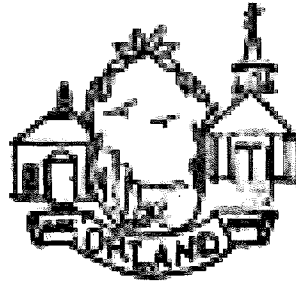


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## TOWN OF ORLAND

### LD 1382 An Act Regarding Dam Repair

Sponsored by:

- Representative Nina Azella Milliken, D - Blue Hill
- Senator Nicole Grohoski, D - Hancock
- Senator David G. Haggan, R - Penobscot
- Representative Steven M. Bishop, R - Bucksport

Committee: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

### **In Favor of the Bill**

My name is Gina Bushong. I am here today representing the Town of Orland, where I serve on the Select Board. In that capacity, I wish to strongly endorse the passage of LD 1382.

The 5 towns in our region, Orland, Bucksport, Penobscot, Blue Hill, and Surry, have been involved in Bucksport Mill LLC's (BuckMill) application to the Department of Environmental Protection for Release From Dam Ownership and Water Level Maintenance (38 MRSA §901-909) for nearly a year. Under this statute, BuckMill seeks to drain our lakes and divest of 3 dams (Alamoosook, Toddy, and Silver Lake), all classified as high hazard by MEMA

These dams form 3 lakes which are critical to our region not only for the recreational and environmental benefits they provide, but also because of the economic value to the communities in terms of business activities and property tax revenues. In the case of Silver Lake, it also provides the town of Bucksport's drinking water and supplies an electricity generation facility. Thus, these dams are essential to the region and must be preserved.

Our very small rural communities have already spent thousands of dollars to develop a solution for protecting these lakes. With the help of the four sponsors of today's bill, along with others,

we are putting in place legislation to form quasi-municipal authorities to take ownership of two of the dams. That is only the first step

All three dams are old and in need of repair. BuckMill, the owner for the last 10 years, has invested as little as possible in their upkeep. So, as new owners, we will be faced with significant costs to address the deferred maintenance of these dams. We most likely will be faced with at least \$500k/dam repair costs in the first year or two. Asking our citizens to fund this investment in that time period will be a very difficult challenge. It is also unlikely that we can access Federal funding for repair projects.

Our long-term goal is to keep these high-hazard dams safe and in good repair while assessing options for upgrades that would be more environmentally friendly as well and reduce the long-term maintenance costs. Having a well-funded State program to support the repair and maintenance of these aging structures across our state would be a significant benefit.

I urge this committee to support this effort.

Respectively submitted

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