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Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety. My name is Ron Russell from Verona Island . I am here in support of LD1382, "An Act Regarding Dam Repair. First, I want to thank Senators Grohoski and Haggan & Representatives Milliken and Bishop for bringing this bill forward. My wife and her sister own a long-time family camp on Alamoosook Lake in Orland. My youngest sister has her home on the Lake as do countless others on Alamoosook and Toddy Pond. Bucksport counts on Silver Lake for a good portion it's town water supply. All 3 lakes have state boat launches and are major sources of recreation for thousands of Maine residents and visitors. I learned to fish on Alamoosook Lake as have our children and their children.

Losing all of this by taking the water out of these lakes would be a tragedy and have serious economic consequences to our region and our state. The only way to protect these lakes and most likely countless others throughout the state is to maintain these very old dams responsibly, because without that, we are waiting for something far worse to happen. We need only look at the storms that happened in late December 2023 and twice more in early 2024. We allocated 60 million dollars of state money in grants (not loans) and significant federal dollars to rebuild and try to get ready for the next storms. They will come and it could be one or more of these dams that could fail with devastating loss of property and even life after the next storm.

The good news, we have a revolving fund that exists in statue with a fully operational MOU, that accomplished a lot in the four, 3-year terms of that agreement. Yet as of March of 2023 it has been discontinued and is currently unfunded. Providing funds for low interest loans through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank will give towns that already own dams and those, like these towns involved in the state's first ever "Petition for Abandonment Process", a real opportunity to make the investments necessary to protect their citizens and their precious lakes and ponds that are so important to all of us. I suspect with the relative ease that this salvage corporation will ultimately be able

to abandon their dams will bring many more towns facing the same prospects of owning old dams.

Maine has upwards of 1,000 dams.

Our lakes and ponds are a 14 billion dollar driver of economic activity to our state and many of our towns have dams that need serious maintenance and repairs, let's give them, at least a chance to find funds at the lowest possible rate, to make the needed repairs now, not after a disaster. Thank you for your time and I'd be glad to answer any questions.