



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Nina Azella Milliken

276 Turkey Farm Road
Blue Hill, ME 04614
Residence: (207) 412-8828
Nina.Milliken@legislature.maine.gov

May 5, 2025

Testimony of Representative Nina Milliken presenting
LD 1698, An Act Regarding Changes of Ownership of Dams
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and friends and colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Nina Milliken and I happily represent the folks of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House. Today I am here to present **LD 1698, An Act Regarding Changes of Ownership of Dams**.

Recently, I came before this committee to present a bill to amend the dam abandonment law that was passed in the mid-90s. As I stated then, Hancock County is currently facing a difficult situation where three dams are in the process of being abandoned. In the 1990s, the Legislature laid out a process for dam abandonment. The process has never been done to completion and because of that, many of the challenges in the statute had not been discovered until my communities and those of Representative Bishop were thrust into this process last year. This committee voted unanimously on LD 62, which will amend that statute.

A short time later, this bill, LD 1698, was printed. This bill seeks to add even more changes to the same statute. I notified your analyst and chairs and asked that they hold onto LD 62 so this committee could decide how best to proceed with the two bills. I also reached out to Laura Paye at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and she crafted this amendment, which I believe does a great job stitching together the two separate bills into one. I trust this committee to do whatever they see as the best way forward, but as the sponsor of both bills, I support a merging of the two with this amendment—if that is also how the committee thinks it is best to proceed.

I'll take a minute to briefly remind the committee of the reason for these bills. BuckMill is a salvage company that currently owns three dams in Hancock County and is trying to abandon them based on the statute passed in the mid-90s. They have not been a good faith negotiator with

the communities impacted by this process. They have consistently done the bare minimum required in that statute, which has presented enormous challenges to the five impacted communities in deciding how to proceed. We have jumped through many hoops and done an enormous amount of work to sort it all out, but we are keenly aware of the absolute need to add more teeth to the statute to make sure that other communities in the future do not need to go through such chaos and fear when they are faced with this same issue—there are an enormous amount of aging dams in every corner of our state. LD 1698 adds to the teeth that were added by LD 62.

I appreciate all of your time and consideration and am happy to try to answer any questions.