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*Testimony of Representative Nina Milliken presenting*

## **LD 1848, An Act to Implement Recommendations for Improved Dam Safety**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and friends and colleagues on the best committee in the Maine Legislature. My name is Nina Milliken and I am proud to represent the wonderful folks from Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House. Today I am happy to be before you to present my bill, **LD 1848, An Act to Implement Recommendations for Improved Dam Safety**.

In the 130th Legislature, Representative Art Bell of Yarmouth presented a bill in the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee to have the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management conduct a study to review Maine's dam safety program. That study produced a report that listed several recommendations for the state to implement to ensure our roughly 1,000 dams are maintained in a way that ensures public safety. The purpose of this bill is to implement all of the recommendations that are listed in that study.

As this committee is likely aware, dam safety is a bit outside of my wheelhouse and I don't have much of a background in this type of policy. However, as I explained in the presentation of my bill last week, LD 1382, my communities and the communities represented by Representative Steve Bishop were thrust last year into an abandonment process with a large salvage company called AIM. Were it not for some legislative steps still in the works, likely the dams would have been successfully abandoned and the waters in Silver Lake, Alamoosook Lake and Toddy Pond be released in October of this year. This would have had catastrophic implications for all five of the surrounding towns, both economically and ecologically.

Regardless of who takes ownership of these dams, they and the many hundreds of other dams across the state all need to be subjected to comprehensive oversight. Our dams statewide are in need of a lot of repair and under their current program, MEMA is doing the best they can but are likely challenged to keep up with the growing concerns. During her State of the National Guard just a couple of weeks ago in the House Chamber, Brigadier General Dianne Dunn referenced the need to pull a dam safety inspector out of retirement in order to have a dam safety inspector.

District 16: Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry, Trenton

The pay that Maine is offering for this position hasn't kept up with other states. This is just one of the issues that this bill seeks to address.

This issue is a serious matter of public safety. As I said in my presentation of the previous dam bill that I brought to this committee, this issue likely impacts every legislative district in the state.

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