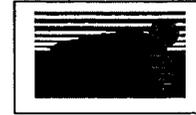


1 Big Sustainable Island

705 Route 135 Monmouth ME 04259



Senator Teppler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kent Ackley, son of Monmouth, and I am here in strong support of LD 2187.

What is the true crown jewel of Maine?

Is it Katahdin? Moosehead? Acadia — places untouched and preserved?

Or is a real crown jewel a place where a generation made its biggest impact, faced its mistakes, and chose to do better? Places like the Kennebec. Places like the Androscoggin.

The Androscoggin tells one of Maine's proudest stories.

It powered our mills and built our towns. It also carried our industrial mistakes. At its worst, it became a national symbol of pollution.

But from that low point came something extraordinary.

The Androscoggin helped inspire Senator Edmund Muskie to craft the Clean Water Act — legislation that has withstood the test of time and remains the cornerstone of modern environmental conservatism: waters that are fishable, swimmable, and not a burden passed to our children.

And then Maine led — with hard work. We invested. We upgraded infrastructure. We partnered with industry. We restored.

Today, the Androscoggin supports recreation, fishing, and local businesses. Families gather along it. The recovery is measurable, visible — and for those of us who remember the old I-95 bridge crossings — even smellable.

LD 2187 is the next responsible step.

This bill updates the water quality classification of a section of the river to reflect the cleaner conditions that now exist. When standards lag behind reality, we leave room for backsliding and risk eroding decades of progress.

Upgrading this classification does two things.

First, it locks in the gains we have made.

Second, it strengthens Maine's long-term prosperity. Clean water fuels recreation, tourism, and community investment. In Maine, environmental quality and economic vitality rise together.

But this is about more than today's economy.

It is about whether we pass on the privilege of clean water to our grandchildren — the ability to swim safely, fish confidently, and take pride in the river that runs through their towns.

I served in the 128th and 129th Legislatures, when the debate was whether a Class C should become a Class B. We made the right call. And here we are, just eight years later, debating whether a B should become an A on the same river.

That is progress.

So again, what is Maine's true crown jewel?

Is it only the places we never touched? Or is it also the river we nearly lost — and invested 50 years restoring?

That is a crown jewel.

LD 2187 is about making sure we never have to do this work again.

I respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.