

Testimony of Charles Spies in Support of LD 2187 subject to amendment to reclassify the Water Quality designation from Class C to Class B on the reach of the Lower Androscoggin River from Worumbo Dam in Lisbon upstream to Gulf Island Pond Dam in Lewiston.

February 25, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Charles Spies. I live on Water Street in Brunswick and have spent 40 years in Topsham and Brunswick, raising my family in the Lower Androscoggin Watershed. I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with my testimony today.

As further background, I volunteer to collect water quality data on the lower river under the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Voluntary River Monitoring Program. Under this program the Department first trains volunteers on how to properly collect water quality data and then screens the collected data for quality assurance once it is received.

I am also the President of the Free the Andro coalition which has five founding members, including: Maine Rivers, American Rivers, RESTORE the north Woods, Merrymeeting Bay Trout Unlimited, and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay. Free the Andro has been formed to work with all the parties involved in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) relicensing of the Brunswick-Topsham Dam. Our focus is on fixing the well-documented barrier to migratory, sea-run fish passage at this site.

Other testimony has been given at this public hearing that provides detailed data on long-term trends in the river's water quality. They build a very strong case for reclassification of the Worumbo to Lewiston reach to Class B. There seems to be little question about these data.

The larger arguments rest on legal interpretation of Federal and State statutes and how to apply the underlying regulations. In my view, there is ample testimony supporting these arguments for an upgrade to Class B along this reach as well.

I don't think I need to add to these facts and figures. Rather, my focus in support is based on a context that I believe to be of equal importance as you weigh your decisions on this proposed amendment to LD 2187: it is the long journey that has been taken by many and the resulting impact on river quality that benefits both the river and the human communities surrounding it.

cleaner Androscoggin we have today. It will codify and protect what generations of good work has accomplished and assure that further progress can be made.

I ask this committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD2187 if amended to include the proposed reclassification of the Androscoggin River segment from Worumbo Dam in Lisbon Falls to Gulf Island Pond Dam from C to B.

Respectfully,

Charles J. Spies III

Resident: 64 Water Street Brunswick, Maine

President, Free the Andro